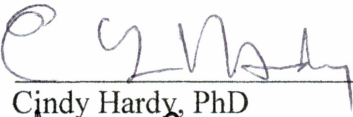


PATHWAY TO ALASKAN STATEHOOD: THE HISTORIC NARRATIVES OF
JACK COGHILL, VIC FISCHER, KATIE HURLEY, AND D.A. BARTLETT, AND
THEIR PRESENCE AT THE ALASKA CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

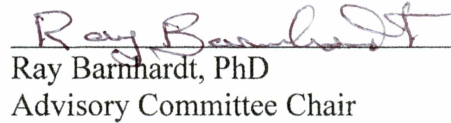
By

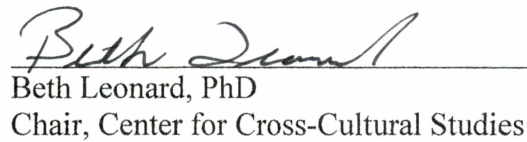
Leslie Drumhiller

RECOMMENDED:

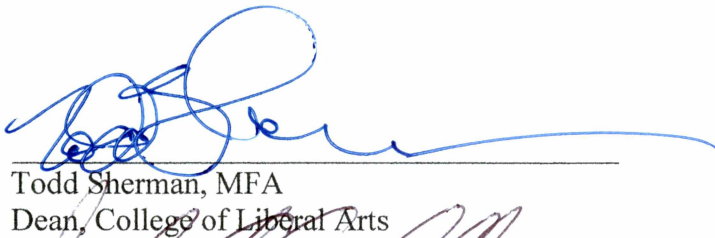

Cindy Hardy, PhD

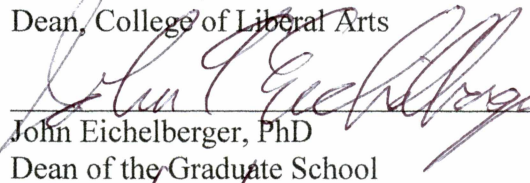

Sean Parson, PhD


Ray Barnhardt, PhD
Advisory Committee Chair


Beth Leonard, PhD
Chair, Center for Cross-Cultural Studies

APPROVED:


Todd Sherman, MFA
Dean, College of Liberal Arts


John Eichelberger, PhD
Dean of the Graduate School

4/5/2016
Date

PATHWAY TO ALASKAN STATEHOOD: THE HISTORICAL NARRATIVES OF
JACK COGHILL, VIC FISCHER, KATIE HURLEY, AND D.A. BARTLETT, AND
THEIR PRESENCE AT THE ALASKA CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

A
THESIS

Presented to the Faculty
of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Leslie Drumhiller, B.A.

Fairbanks, AK

May 2016

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to compare the commonalities and differences in the oral narratives of four participants of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, John B. “Jack” Coghill, Victor “Vic” Fischer, Katherine “Katie” Hurley, and Doris Ann “D.A.” Bartlett.

Applying thematic analysis to the interviews, themes, or codes were extracted from the interviews and unified into code families: “family,” “work,” “Alaska Constitutional Convention,” and “Alaska Constitution,” with other code families supporting these four. The “Alaska Constitutional Convention” becomes the super code, or main theme of this thesis. The research explores three themes: non-partisan politics at the Alaska Constitutional Convention, the camaraderie among the delegates and staff at the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and gender differences among Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother Lee Rothman who gave me life, to my husband David Drumhiller who gave me wings, and to my mentor Cindy Hardy who taught me to fly.

Table of Contents

Signature Page	i
Title Page	ii
Abstract	v
Dedication	vii
Table of Contents	ix
List of Tables	xv
Acknowledgements	xvii
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 Literature Review	5
2.1 Introduction	5
2.2 Place	5
2.3 Economic Resources	9
2.4 Individualism	11
2.5 Community	14
2.6 Alaska Constitutional Convention	15
2.7 Alaska Constitution	21
2.8 Consequences of Statehood	26
Chapter 3 Methodology-The Living History and the Human Perspective of the Construction of the Alaska Constitution	33
3.1 Introduction	33
3.2 Methods	33
3.3 The Oral Narrative Process	36

3.3.1 How the Interviews of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett Contribute to the Oral History of Alaskan Statehood	36
3.3.2 Written Accounts	37
3.3.3 The Strengths and Limitations of the Oral Narrative Process	38
3.3.4 Connection to Place	39
3.3.5 Interviews.....	40
3.3.6 Reasons for Each Interview	41
3.3.7 Interview Place Set-up	43
3.3.8 Recording Device.....	44
3.3.9 Interview Questions	45
3.4 Thematic Analysis	47
Chapter 4 John B. “Jack” Coghill	49
4.1 The Codes and Code Families of Jack Coghill	49
4.2 Introduction.....	51
4.3 Freemason	51
4.4 Principles and Philosophy.....	51
4.5 Family	52
4.6 Work	53
4.7 Politics.....	55
4.8 Alaska Constitutional Convention	61
4.9 Alaska Constitution.....	61
4.10 Structure.....	62

4.11 Coghill's Reflections	65
Chapter 5 Victor "Vic" Fischer.....	69
5.1 The Codes and Code Families of Vic Fischer	69
5.2 Introduction.....	71
5.3 Family	71
5.4 Work	73
5.5 Alaska	74
5.6 People.....	75
5.7 Alaska Constitutional Convention	76
5.8 Alaska Constitution.....	79
5.9 Unity	82
5.10 Fischer's Recollections	85
Chapter 6 Katherine "Katie" Hurley.....	89
6.1 The Codes and Code Families of Katie Hurley	89
6.2 Introduction.....	91
6.3 Family	91
6.4 Work	94
6.5 People.....	97
6.6 Politics.....	97
6.7 Statehood.....	98
6.8 Alaska Constitutional Convention	101
6.9 Hurley's Reflections	106
Chapter 7 Doris Ann "D.A." Bartlett.....	109

7.1 The Codes and Code Families of D.A. Bartlett	109
7.2 Introduction.....	111
7.3 Family	111
7.4 Work	114
7.5 People.....	116
7.6 Alaska	116
7.7 Politics.....	118
7.8 Alaska Constitutional Convention	119
7.9 Bartlett's Reflections	124
Chapter 8 Analysis.....	127
8.1 The Tables of the Codes and Code Families of Analysis	127
8.2 Introduction.....	136
8.3 Family	136
8.4 Work	138
8.5 People.....	140
8.6 Alaska	140
8.7 Politics.....	141
8.8 Alaska Constitutional Convention	142
8.9 Alaska Constitution.....	144
8.10 Freemason	145
8.11 Structure.....	145
8.12 Unity	146
8.13 Statehood.....	146

8.14 Final Analysis	147
Chapter 9 Conclusion.....	149
9.1 Concluding Thoughts.....	156
Bibliography	162

List of Tables

	Page
Table 8.1: Code Family “Family,” Comparison of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.....	127
Table 8.2: Code Family “Work,” Comparison of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.....	128
Table 8.3: Code Family “People,” Comparison of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.....	129
Table 8.4: Code Family “Alaska,” Comparison of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.....	129
Table 8.5: Code Family “Politics,” Comparison of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.....	130
Table: 8.6 Code Family “Alaska Constitutional Convention,” Comparison of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.....	131
Table 8.7: Code Family “Alaska Constitution,” Comparison of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.....	132
Table 8.8: Code Family “Freemason,” Coghill	133
Table 8.9: Code Family “Structure,” Coghill	133
Table 8.10: Codes “Principles” and “Philosophy,” Coghill	134
Table 8.11: Code Family “Camaraderie,” Coghll.....	134
Table 8.12: Code Family “Unity,” Fischer	134
Table 8.13: Code Family “Statehood,” Hurley	135

Acknowledgments

This project has taken eight years to complete, and I am grateful to everyone who has guided and helped me to arrive at the completion of this thesis: To my husband David, who has believed in me, and supports me in my educational goals. To my children Wally, Lynette, Ruth, and Tina, thank you for teaching me humility. I believe in all of you, and I love your intelligence. To my grandchildren Aries, Serena, David, and Krissy, thank you for showering Nana with love, and showing me a future that is bright because you live in it. To my parents Lee and Stu Rothman, you may have shaken off your earthly robes, but I feel your presence daily, and continue to accept your wisdom and your humor. To my committee Dr. Ray Barnhardt, Dr. Cindy Hardy, and Dr. Sean Parson, you expected perfection, gave encouragement freely, and taught me to think like a writer. I will always be grateful for what you have taught me. To the many wonderful admins, who showed me how to navigate the labyrinth. Sandra, Cortney, Leah, Renee, Cindy, and others to many to name, thank you. To Laura and Shelly, at the Graduate School, who guided my steps through the labyrinth of technical advice. To my fellow student leaders at ASUAF, thank you for taking a temporary office assistant and helping to turn her into a Government Relations Director. What we have done will stay with me always, and we have, I believe worked well this semester; Anne, Mathew, Colby, Hannah, Ryan, Joseph, Mickey, Josh, Matt(2), Carissa, Cord, Michael, Jonathan(2), Ivik, Diane, and others to many to name, your laughter and friendship will remain in my heart for the rest of my life. To my library study colleagues, Krystal, Crystal, Nick, and all the rest, we had fun. And an extra-special dedication to my mother, who has inspired me with her stories of education and learning.

Chapter 1 Introduction

In November of 1955, fifty-five delegates and their staff gathered at the University of Alaska in the new student union building to write the constitution for the future state of Alaska. Among these individuals were Jack Coghill, a Nenana shopkeeper, Vic Fischer, a city planner from Anchorage, Katie Hurley, a secretary and office manager from Juneau, and D.A. Bartlett a twenty-one-year-old college graduate from Middlebury College, and the daughter of Alaskan statehood architect Bob Bartlett. These four individuals represent much of the diversity that existed at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. For this thesis, over a period of four years, these individuals were interviewed about their memories of both their lives and their roles within the convention. They took on several different roles at the convention. Jack Coghill and Vic Fischer were delegates. Katie Hurley was the Chief Clerk, and D.A. Bartlett was the convention librarian, researcher, and a clerk, fulfilling a multi-faceted role. The process that was used in this research involved oral history, so that Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett shared their memories using emotional recall, in other words they used emotion to remember their memories, which contained memories and strong emotion connected with the people at the convention.

A few of the authors, who write on Alaskan history, as discussed in this thesis, have managed to convey much of the emotion of the constitutional convention in their books and articles. From the study of Alaskan literature in this research, several themes have emerged: place, economic resources, individualism, community, the Alaska Constitutional Convention, the Alaska Constitution, and the consequences of statehood. These authors wrote from different perspectives; however, they agreed that the convention was one of the highlights of the participants' lives. Before the Alaska Constitutional Convention, Alaska held appeal for many mid-century pioneers, such as John Haines, an Alaskan poet laureate who wrote about "the

emotional appeal of place.”¹ Whether they wrote from the emotional perspective of Haines, or from a political connection to place, individualism, and self-government, as Peter Cannavo, and Gerald McBeath, and Thomas Morehouse do, the recollections of the convention in the literature are vivid. These recollections or memories, require a certain frame of mind. Judith Kleinfeld writes about this when she writes of the pioneering spirit and the frontier as not just in physical space, but as within the framework of one’s own mind.² The connection of place within the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and the satisfaction of those involved is further illustrated by Gerald Bowkett³ who writes about this satisfaction in his book about the convention as a high point in the lives of the participants. This high point was due, in a significant way, to the camaraderie that existed from early on in the convention.

However, the camaraderie and memory of the event were not the only themes to emerge in this research. The non-partisan politics that made it possible for the delegates to accomplish the task of writing a constitution in spite of many different backgrounds and ideas of politics are represented by Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett. Furthermore, gender differences are represented by the experiences and memories of the two men and two women who are at the center of this thesis. To extract these themes, recorded interviews of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett were conducted at different locations. Some of the questions in each interview were the same, and some were tailored to the individual’s life. The recordings were then transcribed closely, and the themes were extrapolated. Thematic Analysis was then applied to the transcripts,

¹ John Haines. *“Forward” The Last Stories of Alaska Land Past and Present* ed. Wayne Mergler (Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Books, 1996), xviii.

² Judith Kleinfeld, Ed.D. *Go for It! Finding Your Own Frontier* (Washington: Epicenter Press, 2003), 18, 44, & 145.

³ Gerald Bowkett, *Reaching for a Star* (Washington: Epicenter Press, 1989).

and codes and code families were created. All of this was accomplished with the use of the interviews.

Jack Coghill was the first of the participants to be interviewed for this thesis. He came from a typical patriarchal family, where work and family were synonymous. Some of his early work was as butcher, undertaker, and member of the Nenana school board. He flew over much of Interior Alaska in a small plane to become a delegate at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. During his interviews, Coghill would speak about the camaraderie that existed at the convention.

Vic Fischer's road to the Alaska Constitutional Convention was a winding one. After being born in Germany, he would spend much of his early childhood in Germany and Russia. From an early age, he dreamed of traveling to the Arctic, and Alaska was as far north as he could go. Fischer worked as a city planner in the city of Anchorage. He was outraged that because he lived in the territory of Alaska, he could not vote in national elections. This led him to the convention as a delegate to write a constitution for the future state of Alaska.

Katie Hurley took part in two recorded phone interviews for this project, and she spent a lot of time talking about her days as a secretary for Ernest Gruening, who, along with many other statehood advocates, would teach her a great deal about the Alaskan Statehood Movement. She also clerked for the territorial senate, before becoming the Chief Clerk of the Alaska Constitutional Convention.

At the time of the convention, D.A. Bartlett was twenty-one and a recent graduate of Middlebury College. At the convention, she felt that she was part of something much bigger than herself. Bartlett believed that the work that she did at the Alaska Constitutional Convention was not very important; however, Bartlett was the librarian, researcher, and clerk at the convention. Her involvement as a member of staff would remain one of the highlights of her life.

With the use of thematic analysis, the interview transcripts of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett were examined closely and themes were extrapolated from them. These themes, or codes were assigned to individual code families. Some of the code families, such as “family,” “work,” “Alaska Constitutional Convention,” and “Alaska Constitution” were used by all four of the people in this research, although the codes within these code families were varied. One of these code families, “Freemason,” is specific to only Coghill. The code families allowed specific themes to emerge from the interviews, and their commonalities and differences were drawn out.

The thematic analysis ultimately extrapolated three main themes from the interviews of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett. These themes are: non-partisan politics at the convention, the camaraderie of the delegates and staff at the convention, and gender equality. These themes are strongly interwoven, and create a template for understanding the lives of these four individuals, their roles in the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and the history of the Alaska Constitution itself.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The Alaskan Statehood Movement and the Alaska Constitutional Convention have fascinated historians and biographers since before Alaska became a state. Many writers have written about Alaska and the convention: teachers, historians, businessman, and politicians. Many of these writers write about the statehood movement from a historical perspective, and these histories have a strong similarity, because they are grounded in oral history. Furthermore, a great deal has been written about the individuals who took part in the Alaskan Statehood Movement, and indeed about the Alaska Constitutional Convention itself. The use of oral narrative creates an active voice among much of the writing about early statehood history, and this in turn creates a similarity, even if the viewpoints expressed are different. Alaska is a young state, so writers have had first-hand access to statehood organizers. As such, a few key themes have emerged from within the historical literature. They are: place, economic resources, individualism, community, the Alaska Constitutional Convention, The Alaska Constitution, and the consequences of statehood.

2.2 Place

Most of the books and articles on the Alaska Constitution, speak about the importance of a strong united government, paying homage to the tradition of those states who came before. Place is a central theme in the development that led to the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and ultimately to Alaskan statehood. In 1955, the Public Administration Service published a three volume series titled *Constitutional Studies*. They write

When Alaska becomes a state, she will assume the obligations and receive the privileges of a member of the American federal union. Certain defined relationships between Alaska and other states and between Alaska and the national government will be brought into being. Alaska will become, in the words of Chief Justice Chase, a member of that indestructible union of indestructible states.⁴

Chase's statement reflects the rite of passage attitude, and importance that was placed upon Alaska becoming a state by illustrating the benefits of statehood.

Control of Alaska's resources by Alaskans, and indeed the land that these resources reside in, was very important to statehood advocates. This in turn supported the Alaskan cultural sense of place. In his 2007 book *The Working Landscape Founding, Preservation, and the Politics of Place*, Peter Cannavo writes

...in order to function in our spatial surroundings and effectively interact with other persons and other organisms that share our physical space, our surroundings must in some measure be stable, coherent and legible. We must be able to make sense of and navigate the places around us. We must be able to feel at home and grounded in, and identify with a few special places that we inhabit, and work in, or frequently visit. Certainly, physical location does not define the totality of human activities and self-perceptions. However, to deny the importance of place is to indulge in absurdity, to overlook what it means to be an embodied human being. To the degree that place and proximity remain fundamental to human existence, contemporary threats to place are deeply troubling. At risk is our ability to comprehend, navigate and feel connected to the physical, special world.⁵

Throughout the past one-hundred fifty years, Alaska has been promoted for its space, and our interactions with that space.

Both pro development groups and conservationists used the same message of the last frontier, and raw untapped wilderness to promote their cause for Alaska. In the forward to the 1996 book *The Last Stories of New Alaska Land Past and Present*, John Haines writes

⁴ Public Administration Service. *Constitutional Studies Volume One* (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1955), 2.

⁵ Peter F. Cannavo. *The Working Landscape Founding, Preservation, and the Politics of Place* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007), 18 & 19.

...Alaska (is) a place physically remote to the typical American attitude toward Alaska—a place physically remote to the majority of people yet immediate in its emotional appeal and dreamlike significance. No matter how familiar that repeated phrase, the last frontier, it remains true of Alaska in many ways, and represents a theme that requires continual evaluation as this century nears its end and the global state of mind now asserts itself, whether we mean by that the corporate exploitation of remaining resources or the more considerate response we know as environmental protection—the extremes within which the fate of lands and nations seems destined to be decided in our time.⁶

Both developmental groups and conservationists use the idea of the vast space, to promote their ideals of land development and the preservation of a vast pristine wilderness.

Historians also write about the tradition that this action entails. The recruitment for future citizens of Alaska was strongly promoted by statehood advocates and the circumstance of an increase in population during World War II. Many individuals had come to Alaska, hoping to establish a place and create a home for themselves. In their book *Alaska, U.S.A.*, published in 1959, Herb and Miriam Hilscher write

Alaska's population doubled in less than twenty years, and the zeal for full equality with citizens living in the States became a burning passion, a flaming goal to be achieved. Most of Alaska's residents came from the States, and they protested being demoted to second-class citizenship—to colonial status.⁷

However, the Hilschers advocate that their readers temper their desire to come North with the reality of dealing with life in Alaska. They write

Due to misinformation, gilding the lily, exuberant journalism and doubtful reporting, thousands and thousands will come north who should never leave their homes Outside.⁸

⁶ John Haines. "Forward" *The Last Stories of Alaska Land Past and Present* ed. Wayne Mergler (Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Books, 1996), xviii.

⁷ Herb and Miriam Hilscher. *Alaska, U.S.A.* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1959), 17.

⁸ Herb and Miriam Hilscher. *Alaska, U.S.A.*, 22.

Those who came and settled successfully exuded the passion for their new home, and American author and Alaskan statehood advocate, Edna Ferber noticed this. The Hilcschers write

As keen an observer as exists in the literary world today, Miss Ferber declared earnestly, I have... (seen)... the drive, the urge, the idealism, the youth and the compelling spirit of achievement that I have in Alaska. It thrills me. I feel it all over the Northland. It's like the Twentieth-Century fire in men's souls that was present three generations ago in the settling of the West. Miss Ferber was gathering material for her *Ice Palace*, a novel that helped to plead eloquently the cause of statehood for Alaska.⁹

The connection of the individual to place is significant in the history of the Alaska. For example, the University of Alaska, now the University of Alaska Fairbanks, is part of the story of Alaska. Telling the story of a significant historical event, such as the Alaska Constitutional Convention, Terrence Cole, in his 1994 book, *The Cornerstone on College Hill* writes

Expansion of the University of Alaska made it possible for the campus to host Alaska's Constitutional Convention from November 1955 through February 1956. Hoping that (a) well-written constitution would convince Congress and (the) Eisenhower administration of Alaska's political maturity, and revive the stalled statehood movement, fifty-five delegates elected by the people of Alaska... assembled in the just completed Student Union Building in November 1955 to draft a state constitution.¹⁰

Students at the university have always been involved in local politics, and in the politics of the territory/state. This was true in 1955 at the beginning of the Alaska Constitutional Convention. In his 2009 article *Not Old Enough to Vote, but Able to Support Statehood: University of Alaska Students and the Statehood Movement, 1955-1957*, Ross Coen write

⁹ Herb and Miriam Hilscher. *Alaska, U.S.A.*, vi.

¹⁰ Terrence Cole. *The Cornerstone on College Hill*, 152 & 153.

At the opening ceremony of the Alaska Constitutional Convention on November 8, 1955, University of Alaska (UA) student body president Kenneth Carson welcomed the delegates to the Fairbanks campus: “Now is the proper time for Alaska to become a state and for us to govern ourselves. We sincerely welcome you, you who will build a solid foundation upon which a state government must stand.”¹¹

2.3 Economic Resources

Economic resources were a central theme in the struggle for Alaskan statehood, and control of Alaskan resources was a primary element in the efforts of Alaskans struggling for home rule. Ernest Gruening was one of the catalysts of the Alaskan Statehood Movement, and published *The Battle for Alaska Statehood* in 1967, portraying the struggle for statehood as a campaign.¹² Gruening also illustrated the movement through the voices of Alaskans such as Elmer Rasmuson, who says

Statehood... would be a change, and I strongly advocate this change because of the benefits which cannot come in any other way. These benefits are two-way for Alaska and for the Nation. These two-way benefits are also of two kinds—economic and social. Taking up the economic development of Alaska itself, we are presently a land of shackles.¹³

Gruening used Rasmuson and others to illustrate the evidence of statehood supporters during *“The Battle for Alaska Statehood.”*¹⁴

By early 1955, many Alaskans were preparing themselves for the convention. In promoting the cause of statehood, advocates published a book, *Alaska—Who’s Here—What’s Doing—Who’s Doing It 1955*. In the forward, then Alaska Territorial Governor B. Frank Heintzleman writes

¹¹ Ross Coen. “Not Old Enough to Vote, but Able to Support statehood: University of Alaska Students and the Statehood Movement 1955-1957” *Alaska History* (Vol. 24, No. 1, Spring 2009), 1.

¹² Ernest Gruening. *The Battle for Alaska Statehood* (College: University of Alaska Press, 1967), 1-122.

¹³ Ernest Gruening. *The Battle for Alaska Statehood*, 66-67.

¹⁴ Ernest Gruening. *The Battle for Alaska Statehood*, 1-122.

...the future we all visualize for Alaska cannot be realized simply by the possession of natural resources and the availability of means of access to development them. We need more people—men and women with the desire and ability to get ahead in a pioneer country.¹⁵

The cohesive force that many historians wrote about was due in a large part to the structure of the statehood movement and the Alaska Constitutional Convention. Delegates and statehood advocates soon realized that statehood for Alaska meant a great deal of work. In his 2004 paper *Blinded by Riches: The Permanent Funding Problem and the Prudhoe Bay Effect*, Terrence Cole writes

Despite their earnest hopes and dreams, and the vast resources the statehood compact had transferred to the 49th State, Alaskans would realize almost immediately that the hard road did not end with statehood; it was only beginning... Thomas R. Stewart, the secretary of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, viewed the statehood landslide as a reflection of the powerful emotional appeal of the right of self-government for the people of Alaska... Alaskans awoke in 1959 from the dreams of statehood's limitless possibilities to the unforgiving reality of its precarious fiscal position, as it tried to meet limitless needs with sharply limited resources. From the State of Alaska's origin in 1959, the fiscal problems of organizing, staffing, and operating the largest state in the history of the United States consumed Alaskan leaders.¹⁶

Many current and future residents would benefit from Alaska's status as a new state, with the transfer of federal land. Control of Alaskan land and resources had been a central tenant of the Alaskan Statehood Movement. In his book *Alaska a Challenge in Conservation*, Richard Cooley writes

¹⁵ Edmond C. Jeffery ed. *Alaska—Who's Here—What's Doing—Who's Doing It 1955* (Anchorage: The Jeffery Publishing Company, 1955).

¹⁶ Terrence Cole. *Blinded by Riches: The Permanent Funding Problem and the Prudhoe Bay Effect* (Anchorage: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 2004), 82, 83, & 84.

One of the largest land transactions in the history of the nation is taking place in Alaska today. With passage of the Statehood Act in 1958, Alaska was given the right to select approximately 104 million acres from the federal public domain. Nearly one-third of the total area of the state, or an area larger than California...No other state has had quite the same opportunity to conceive and carry out a rational land program on such a gigantic scale.¹⁷

Passion and idealism only took the new state so far, and the practical applications of resources and establishing a solid economic base became first and foremost in the minds of many Alaskans. Article VIII of the Alaska Constitution confirms this. In his 1962 book *The Future of Alaska Economic Consequences of Statehood*, George Rogers writes

The natural resource article of the constitution (Article VIII) swept away the ambivalence which had plagued broad federal policy, causing it to hover indecisively between the fostering of unbridled exploitation or sustained-yield harvesting and between development primarily for the benefit of resident or of non-resident interests. Reading through the several sections of the article in order, it was clearly stated that policy would be to encourage the settlement of its land and the development of its resources for maximum use consistent with the public interests.¹⁸

2.4 Individualism

Alaskans, according to much of the literature covered in this project, celebrate their own individualism, and their efforts toward self-government form a key element in the statehood movement. George Sundborg, a delegate to the Alaska Constitutional Convention, wrote a paper in 1946, *Statehood for Alaska the Issues Involved and the Facts About the Issues*, in which he writes about the Alaskan desire for self-government.¹⁹ In his paper, Sundborg talks about the population of Alaska and the cost of statehood, answering the critics of statehood by comparing

¹⁷ Richard A. Cooley. *Alaska a Challenge in Conservation* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 3.

¹⁸ George W. Rogers. *The Future of Alaska Economic Consequences of Statehood* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1962), 177.

¹⁹ George Sundborg. *Statehood for Alaska the Issues Involved and the Facts About the Issues*, (Anchorage: Alaska Statehood Association, 1946), <http://www.alaska.edu/creatingalaska/downloads/Statehood-for-Alaska.pdf> (accessed 2012)

Alaska to Arizona in relation to population and the cost of statehood.²⁰ Sundborg writes “Because of its many parallels to conditions in Alaska today, the statehood experience of Arizona, last of the states to be admitted, probably will prove instructive to Alaskans.”²¹

The small population made it easier for a focus on such individualism.

By 1947, when Edward Herron wrote *Alaska Land of Tomorrow*, Fairbanks’ population had almost quadrupled to 5,000 people. Herron also compares the Fairbanks community to other American towns. Herron writes

Fairbanks is inhabited by 5,000 very earnest people, who raise no more rumpus than the people of any other town, whose guns are all legitimate, and whose whips long ago were replaced by self-starters. The fact that the town swelters during the summer and then adjusts itself to living in fifty-below weather during the winter, merely adds color and zest to the process of earning a living.²²

These early pioneers and their families would become established citizens of the Alaskan Territory, however when World War II was ending, people from outside Alaska were looking with interest at becoming Alaskan. In the 1945 magazine, *Alaska the Territorial Life Magazine*, Lieutenant William S. Murray wrote *A Soldier Looks at Postwar Alaska*. He showed the reader the attention that was being paid to the territory, when he writes

²⁰ George Sundborg. *Statehood for Alaska the Issues Involved and the Facts About the Issues*, (Anchorage: Alaska Statehood Association, 1946), <http://www.alaska.edu/creatingalaska/downloads/Statehood-for-Alaska.pdf> (accessed 2012)

²¹ George Sundborg. *Statehood for Alaska the Issues Involved and the Facts About the Issues*, (Anchorage: Alaska Statehood Association, 1946), <http://www.alaska.edu/creatingalaska/downloads/Statehood-for-Alaska.pdf> (accessed 2012)

²² Edward A. Herron. *Alaska Land of Tomorrow* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1947), 154.

...the war has placed Alaska in the limelight to an extent never dreamed of. Greely's celebrated admonition to Go West has a modern counterpart—for many a serviceman intends to Go North and escape the stagnation of his home grounds. It therefore seems high time to soberly evaluate the postwar future of Alaska, from the viewpoint of the restless returning soldier. Despite all the discussion that has occurred, this still needs to be done. To understand the future of Alaska, one must first understand its past. Alaska is a case of arrested development.²³

The Alaska Constitutional Convention reflected the frontier attitude of creating something new and different, and the delegates and staff embraced this. In her 2003 book *Go for It! Finding Your Own Frontier*, Judith Kleinfeld write

Americans are the people of the frontier. To be there means going out on the edge, doing something different with your life, making a mark. You can pioneer wherever you are... On a frontier, there is so little resistance to a new idea. There is not established hierarchy to hold you back. You do not have to spend years paying your dues... Despite what some historians have argued, it is not the frontier that creates the American spirit. It is the American spirit that creates frontiers. It is not just natural for people to go west (or north), to leave home and family and comfort and position and head for the new territory with all its... risks... That the frontier exists in our minds makes it more powerful, not less. The frontier is our national romance. This means that frontiers are everywhere, if we have the imagination to see them and the heart to embrace them.²⁴

Both the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and the creation of the Alaska Constitution extrapolated the ideal of doing something new and different.

The need for individualism was a critical element of the Alaskan statehood movement, which translated into a strong desire for self-government. Gerald McBeath and Thomas Morehouse explore this in their 1994 book *Alaska Politics and Government*, when they write

²³ Lieutenant William S. Murray. "A Soldier Looks At Postwar Alaska" *Alaska The Territorial Life Magazine* (Seattle: Alaska Life Publishing Co., February 1945), 54.

²⁴ Judith Kleinfeld, Ed.D. *Go for It! Finding Your Own Frontier* (Washington: Epicenter Press, 2003), 18, 44, & 145.

The theme of independence, translated into self-government, encompasses the interests of individuals, groups, regions, and the entire state. It also illuminates a large portion of Alaska's history... The statehood movement best represents the struggle for power by territorial residents. Frustrated by decisions taken outside Alaska—political decisions made (in) Washington, D.C., and economic decisions made by powerful business concerns in Seattle—statehood leaders campaigned for the largest measure of independence granted to any state.²⁵

The self-government that McBeath and Morehouse write about, shows a strong connection between the promotion of individual liberty and individualism. This shows the strong connection between individualism and the constitution.

2.5 Community

The fascination of Alaskans with the communities in which they reside is one that many contemporary authors on Alaska write about, and is a significant part of a connection with place. In his book, *Old Yukon Tales—Trails—and Trials*, published in 1938, James Wickersham writes about his life and about life in interior Alaska at the beginning of the Twentieth Century.²⁶ With an extremely keen sense of the law and its interpretation, Wickersham addresses the cultural significance of different Alaskan communities, the political figures of the early Twentieth Century, and their recognition of the significance of Alaska's resources.²⁷ In an excerpt from President Wilson's message, Wickersham writes, "Alaska, as a storehouse should be unlocked."²⁸ Wickersham presents information about Alaskans, their community, and their

²⁵ Gerald A. McBeath and Thomas A. Morehouse. *Alaska Politics and Government* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 1-393.

²⁶ Honorable James Wickersham. *Old Yukon Tales—Trails—and Trials* (Washington D.C.: Washington Law Book Co., 1938), 1-514.

²⁷ Honorable James Wickersham. *Old Yukon Tales—Trails—and Trials*, 1-514.

²⁸ Honorable James Wickersham. *Old Yukon Tales—Trails—and Trials*, 469.

connection to the land.²⁹ Wickersham's writing is detailed, and he had access to the early pioneers of Alaska.³⁰

The importance of community to the Alaskan statehood movement, was addressed as early as 1916 with the introduction by Delegate James Wickersham to the first statehood bill. In his diary, dated November 15, 1915, Wickersham included a clipping of a newspaper that states

...Delegate Wickersham stated that at the coming session of congress he will introduce a bill to grant statehood to Alaska. A constitutional convention would be necessary and there are various other reasons which seemed to make the delegate believe quite a delay likely. In the meantime, he said, he will try to secure broader powers for the territorial legislature.³¹

By 1916, Wickersham was already established in the territory and promoting the cause of statehood; the community of Fairbanks, where the constitution would be written, was already well established. In the 1922 *Rand McNally Guide to Alaska and Yukon*, states

...Fairbanks, population, 1,155 (1920 Census), the head of navigation for the steamers plying to Whitehorse and St. Michael, is a town that in many respects resembles many of the prosperous towns in the United States. Here are located the district court and all of the administrative offices of the fourth division of Alaska...³²

However small, the population of Alaska showed itself to be a strong community.

2.6 Alaska Constitutional Convention

The central theme of this project is the Alaska Constitutional Convention, which took place in November of 1955. Before the start of the convention, Alaskans were on the threshold of statehood. Once the dates of Alaska Constitutional Convention had been determined, statehood

²⁹ Honorable James Wickersham. *Old Yukon Tales—Trails—and Trials*, 1-514.

³⁰ Honorable James Wickersham. *Old Yukon Tales—Trails—and Trials*, 1-514.

³¹ James Wickersham. *Diary of James Wickersham* (Alaska State Library – Historical Collections MS 107 Box 4 Diary 25, 1915), 41. library.alaska.gov/hist/hist_docs/wickersham/ASL-MS0107-diary025-1915 (accessed 10/28/15)

³² Rand McNally. *Rand McNally Guide to Alaska and Yukon for Tourists, Investors, Homeseekers and Sportsman* (New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1922), 158.

advocates reach out to various agencies to create preparatory paperwork for use by convention delegates. One such organization was the Public Administration Service. By November of 1955 they, and the Alaska Statehood Committee, published a three volume set of papers titled *Constitutional Studies*. The purpose of these volumes was to educate the delegates about the task of writing a constitution. The Public Administration Service (PSA) writes

American tradition requires that the constitution shall be a written one. It is, American theory, the contract by which the people, from whom all political power flows, agree to establish a government and to surrender to it the authority which they wish it to exercise. It is designed to establish the principles upon which the political system rests, to lay out the broad plan of governmental structure, and to prescribe the limits of governmental power over the individual. It is a contract among free people subject to change only with the people's consent.³³

Many of delegates selected, traveled to the convention by car, and one of these was Valdez resident Bill Egan. In his 2008 book *North to the Future the Alaska Story 1959-2009*, Dermot Cole writes

Egan hitched a ride to Fairbanks in the fall of 1955 to take his place as a delegate at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. His fellow delegates selected him as president and he won praise from all sides for his even-handed rule and ability to instill cooperation. Katie Hurley, chief clerk of the convention was astonished to learn that he had committed the rules of the convention to memory.³⁴

When the delegates arrived at the convention in November of 1955, they were also presented with a specific handbook titled *Handbook for Delegates of the Alaska Constitutional Convention*. In the forward, the Alaskan Statehood Committee writes

³³ Public Administration Service. *Constitutional Studies Volume One* (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1955), 2.

³⁴ Dermot Cole. *North to the Future the Alaska Story 1959-2009*(Washington: Epicenter Press, 2008).

This handbook which has been prepared for the Delegates deals primarily with the form and mechanics of a constitutional convention. It is based on a review of the practices of other recent constitutional conventions, and is intended to serve essentially as a check list of the procedural steps that Alaska's Constitutional Convention will be considering.³⁵

As Alaska approached the official beginning of its statehood, in 1958 the U.S. Department of the Interior created “a summary of investigations of statehood for Alaska, 1916-57” in their book *Mid-Century Alaska*.³⁶ They note that the first legislation in 1916 began “with the proposal of statehood for Alaska, H.R. 13978 introduced in the House of Representatives.”³⁷ Published in 1958, *Mid-Century Alaska* introduces the financial benefits of Alaskan life, using picturesque geographical description to inform the traveler to Alaska or the research historian, about the communities in Alaska.³⁸

Another Alaskan author who used the testimonies of prominent statehood advocates to illustrate the atmosphere of the convention and statehood movement was Claus Naske, a former University of Alaska Fairbanks history professor and Alaskan author, who published *An Interpretive History of Alaskan Statehood* in 1973. Naske writes

(An) Anchorage paper described the scene: The delegates sit in a half circle facing the rostrum on one-armed chairs. Voluminous literature is stuffed underneath each chair and daily mimeographed reports of the committees are added to these piles. Politics appears to be minimized and President William Egan says that not one delegate has asked him for a committee chairmanship.³⁹

³⁵ Alaska Statehood Committee. *Handbook for Delegates to the Constitutional Convention* (College: Alaska Statehood Committee, 1955), i.

³⁶ United States Department of the Interior. *Mid-Century Alaska* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1958), 1-170.

³⁷ United States Department of the Interior. *Mid-Century Alaska*, 18.

³⁸ United States Department of the Interior. *Mid-Century Alaska*, 1-170.

³⁹ Claus-M. Naske. *An Interpretive History of Alaskan Statehood* (Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1973), 142.

Self-determination means a person's desire to determine and control their own destiny, and that is what lay at the core of the Alaskan Statehood Movement. According to Fischer, one speaker who spoke about self-determination on the first day of the convention was University of Alaska Student Body President Kenneth Carson who says

...we all should realize now is the proper time for Alaska to become a state and for us to govern ourselves. Today we are students, but tomorrow we hope to be citizens of the State of Alaska, and this thought in mind we sincerely welcome you, you who will build a solid foundation upon which a state government must stand.⁴⁰

For as much as the convention was non-partisan, organizers and statehood supporters adhered to a strictly Democratic process. In 1979 his book *Edward Lewis Bob Bartlett of Alaska a Life in Politics*, Claus Naske writes

The delegates first assembled for the convention on November 8, 1955, at the University of Alaska, where Bartlett delivered the keynote address, at which he stressed the democratic processes that must underlie the writing of the constitution. Drawing parallels with the federal constitutional convention of 1787, Bartlett pointed precedents from that earlier convention which would benefit the delegates, but he suggested to them that they had to perform pioneering work to lay the foundations for natural resources policy and management, a key for statehood. He reminded the delegates that they would write on a clean slate in the field of resource policy.⁴¹

The absence of special interest groups and their lobbyists was not the only reason the delegates at the Alaska Constitutional Convention were able to complete their task. The single minded purpose that affected everyone involved with the creation of the Alaska Constitution was, and still is, a tangible entity. In 1986 Gordon Harrison wrote *Alaska's Constitution a Citizen's Guide*. He writes

⁴⁰ Victor Fischer. *Alaska's Constitutional Convention* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1975), 25 & 26.

⁴¹ Claus-M. Naske. *Edward Lewis Bob Bartlett of Alaska a Life in Politics* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1979), 151 & 152.

(The) general unanimity of outlook did not mean that all the delegates saw everything the same way or that differences of opinion went unguarded. It did mean, however, that compromises could be easily reached when disputes arose, and that the convention was spared deep, bitter, divisive conflict over basic policy issues.⁴²

Though Fairbanks Daily News Miner publisher Charles Snedden spent most of his energy promoting public access to the convention, behind the scenes, he played a critical role in quietly laying the groundwork for the most innovative measure put before delegates. George Lehleitner was one of the national advocates of Alaskan statehood, and would use his influence to garner support. In their 2011 article *The Road to Statehood*, LiteSite Alaska writes

On January 23, 1956, George H. Lehleitner, referring to himself as a private citizen of New Orleans, Louisiana, spoke to the delegates of the Alaska Constitutional Convention and urged them to adopt the Tennessee Plan as the roadmap for pursuing statehood. He had written to the delegates in advance of his speech, too, detailing the aggressive plan in which a Territory, after writing and gaining voter approval for its Constitution, elects and sends a congressional delegation to Washington, D.C., even though the delegation is as yet unseated. The strategy had worked before, 100 percent of the time in fact, first for Tennessee and then for Michigan, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, California, and Oregon.⁴³

Like the other states that had adopted this plan, Alaska's plan to send an unseated delegation to Washington D.C. would be, they hoped, an effective strategy to show Congress that Alaska was ready for self-government.

Dermot Cole also writes about the inner workings at the convention in his 2006 book *Historic Fairbanks*.

⁴² Gordon S. Harrison. *Alaska's Constitution a Citizen's Guide* (Anchorage: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1986), 4.

⁴³ LiteSite Alaska. *The Road to Statehood* (Anchorage: University of Alaska, Anchorage, 2011), 3.

For seventy-five working days, the delegates debated the framework of the future state, meeting in the new Student Union Building at the university. The students moved out and the delegates moved in, receiving \$35 per day for their efforts. After the convention, the University of Alaska named the building Constitution Hall.⁴⁴

At the end of the convention, everyone who had taken part or witnessed felt the importance of what they had just accomplished. In his 1972 book *Farthest North President Charles E. Bunnell and the Early History of the University of Alaska*, William Cashen writes

The Convention ended on February 5, 1956, when the 55 delegates, headed by William A. Egan, convention president, each affixed his signature to the constitution at a public ceremony in the gymnasium. It was a historic day for Alaska and for the university, which during the three-month session had learned a great deal about the issues involved as professors, students, and visitors would audit the debates which developed in framing the basic document of the proposed state government.⁴⁵

Other Alaskan authors have discussed the struggle that ended with the Alaska Constitutional Convention; one of these was convention delegate Fischer, who writes

Looking back to those events that preceded and prepared the way for statehood, Alaska's constitutional convention of 1955-56 stands out as perhaps the final major milestone presaging the end of a long and sometimes bitter struggle for self-determination.⁴⁶

Memories of the emotion surrounding the Alaska Constitutional Convention were strong twenty-five years later, as Tom Kizzia writes in a 1984 booklet for the Anchorage Daily News, *Reflections on Alaska's Journey to Statehood*.⁴⁷ In writing about the success of the convention, Kizzia writes

⁴⁴ Dermot Cole. *Historic Fairbanks* (Texas: Historical Printing Network, 2006), 41

⁴⁵ William R. Cashen. *Farthest North College President Charles E. Bunnell and the Early History of the University of Alaska* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1972), 376.

⁴⁶ Victor Fischer. *Alaska's Constitutional Convention*, vii.

⁴⁷ Tom Kizzia. *Reflections on Alaska's Journey to Statehood* (Anchorage: Anchorage Daily News, 1984), 1-32.

Largely ignored by special interest lobbyists who didn't take them seriously, the delegates put together a sure, flexible constitution that is, to this day hailed as a model for other states.⁴⁸

Years later, memories of the convention are still strong, and the emotional recall is felt by all those who participated and even by those who did not. John Whitehead writes

The Alaskans remember their convention in the mystical, almost religious tones of a transcendental experience. In the quarter century since statehood they have turned the convention into a political legend that is revered and perpetuated even by people who did not participate in the event...As the interviews with the Alaskans progressed, I quickly became struck not so much with the answers to the specific question on state development as with the emotional intensity, the precision of detail, the almost reverential tone with which people described their participation in the statehood movement, particularly in the 1955-56 convention.⁴⁹

During the interviews for this thesis, Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett shared their memories with a great deal of emotion, speaking in almost reverent tones when talking about the convention.⁵⁰

2.7 Alaska Constitution

The purpose of the delegates at the Alaska Constitutional Convention was to write the best possible constitution that they could. The convention is remembered well by those that took part in the creation of a constitution. In his 1989 book *Reaching for a Star*, Gerald Bowkett writes

⁴⁸ Tom Kizzia. *Reflections on Alaska's Journey to Statehood*, 32.

⁴⁹ John S. Whitehead. "Statehood for Alaska and Hawai'i." *Interpreting Alaska's History: An Anthology*, Mary Childers Mangusso and Stephen W. Haycox, ed. (Anchorage: Alaska Pacific University Press, 1989), 416 & 418.

⁵⁰ Jack Coghill, Vic Fischer, Katie Hurley, and D.A. Bartlett, Assorted Recorded Interviews (by Leslie Drumhiller), 2010, 2012, & 2013.

For most of the men and women who participated in that historic convention, the writing of the state constitution was one of the most satisfying of their lives, and they would ever after take great pride in what they had accomplished... The delegates went to Fairbanks with a sense of mission, they would be advancing the then-languishing statehood cause... they would have the opportunity to design a state government of, by and for Alaskans... (The delegates were)... closely watched by their fellow Alaskans.⁵¹

In the 1993 book by Harry Ritter, *Alaska's History the People, Land, and Events of the North Country*, Ritter presents a brief overview that introduces specific events and emotions from Alaska's history.⁵² 1955 was a pivotal year with the establishment of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, Ritter writes

In 1955, the Territorial Legislature approved a constitutional convention in Fairbanks to draft a constitution for the region. Statehood's backers intended to show that Alaskans had sound ideas about administering and financing state government. Within three months, delegates produced a draft document that was a model of practicality. It was an important step in proving Alaska's political maturity to Congress and the nation.⁵³

The men and women who became delegates to the Alaska Constitutional Convention were not apathetic, however. They were focused on the creation of a document that would benefit Alaskans, and give them control of their resources. One way that they accomplished this was the creation of Article VIII. In their 2006 article *The Alaska Constitution: Realizing the Theory of a Compound Republic*, Barbara Allen and Donald Lutz write

⁵¹ Gerald Bowkett, *Reaching for a Star* (Washington: Epicenter Press, 1989),

⁵² Harry Ritter. *Alaska's History the People, Land, and Events of the North Country* (Seattle: Alaska Northwest Books, 1993), 1-143.

⁵³ Harry Ritter. *Alaska's History the People, Land, and Events of the North Country*, 89.

In 1955 Vincent Ostrom met with delegates to the Alaska Constitutional Convention to draft an innovative constitutional article devoted entirely to the disposition of the polity's natural resources. Federal land grants would soon give Alaskans title to over 100 million acres of land as well as title to the submerged lands in contiguous waters and navigable waters and subsurface minerals. The delegates were to make constitutional choices that would guide the collective choices of contesting interests in the use and preservations of the bounty.⁵⁴

For the delegates of the convention, local government was a definitive part of Alaskans' desire for full representation in national politics within the structure of a federal state. In their 1971 book *Borough Government in Alaska*, Thomas Morehouse and Victor Fischer write

All of Alaska was to be subdivided into logical borough units. Depending on readiness and capability for government, these would be classified as organized or unorganized boroughs, and the people of each area would then be able to determine the details of their own governmental units. Recognizing the varying fiscal capabilities of different regions, delegates anticipated that stat subsidies would be necessary to assist in carrying out local functions... In accordance with the constitution, the First State Legislature authorized home rule status for cities and established the Local Boundary Commission and Local Affairs Agency in the Office of the Governor.⁵⁵

Article X of the Alaska Constitution was established to deal with local government. In his 1972 article *Recollections on the Writing of the Alaska Constitution*, Tom Stewart writes

The other unique provision is Article X, on local government. The committee members here sought to avoid the anachronisms and multiple problems of complex local government structures as found in virtually all of the other states. In its basic provision it seeks to provide for the minimum of local government units within a local area and for the maximum local government autonomy and governmental authority. In other words, it was sought to avoid multiple overlapping jurisdictions in any given local area, which plagues the operation of local governments throughout much of the nation.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Barbra Allen and Donald Lutz. *The Alaska Constitution: Realizing the Theory of a Compound Republic* (Bloomington: Vincent Ostrom, 2006), 4. www.indiana.edu/~voconf/papers/allen_voconf.pdf

⁵⁵ Thomas A. Morehouse and Victor Fischer. *Borough Government in Alaska* (Fairbanks: Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, 1971), 39 & 70.

⁵⁶ Thomas B. Stewart. *Recollections on the Writing of the Alaska State Constitution* ostrumworkshop.indiana.edu/colloquia/materials/papers/stewart_papers.pdf

The constitution that was created by the delegates at the convention gave a great deal of power to the state's executive branch. In his 2008 book *North to the Future the Alaska Story 1959-2009*, Dermot Cole writes

The Alaska Constitution...created a strong executive to compensate for the lack of accountability in territorial government.⁵⁷

In February of 1956, the delegates of the Alaska Constitutional Convention had created a Model Constitution, and it was considered one of the best in the country. The convention itself published the Alaska Constitution, which had fifteen amendments and three ordinances. Article One Section One of the constitution sums up the feelings of equality that Alaskans felt that they were entitled to. The delegates write

Article 1 Section 1. This constitution is dedicated to the principles that all persons have a natural right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the enjoyment of the rewards of their own industry; that all persons are equal and entitled to equal rights, opportunities, and protection under the law; and that all persons have corresponding obligations to the people and to the State.⁵⁸

The constitution that was created at the Alaska Constitutional Convention is considered to be one of our nation's best. Naske writes

Alaska's constitutional convention had produced a brief document of 14,400 words which the National Municipal League termed as one of the best, if not the best, state constitution ever written. The document was short and flexible to allow for the changes which the future would bring. It provided for a government that would foster the growth and development of the whole state and the welfare of all its citizens.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Dermot Cole. *North To The Future the Alaska Story, 1959-2009*, 46.

⁵⁸ The Delegates of the Alaska Constitutional Convention. *The Alaska Constitution* (College: The University of Alaska, 1956), 5.

⁵⁹ Claus-M. Naske. *An Interpretive History of Alaskan Statehood*, 143.

Many historical writers wrote about aspects of the structure of the Alaska Constitutional Convention and of the memories of the authors who signed the Constitution. Jack Coghill in his 2009 book *Growing up in Alaska*, writes

On February 5, 1956, we gathered to sign the Alaska Constitution in what was then the old university gym, now called Signer's Hall... (Of) the people who wrote the constitution, there are only a few of us left now, the document had held its own with the test of time.⁶⁰

It has been more than fifty years since the end of the convention, and Coghill's memories of the convention have remained with him throughout his life. He is able to retell and share these memories with people who weren't alive at the time of the convention in his book.

The constitution that was created at the convention was called a living document by the delegates who drafted it. In her 2000 online article *Writing a Constitution*, Deborah Tobola writes

The process took four months. The result was a living document, the Alaska Constitution. "It was phenomenal-the most uplifting thing I've ever done in my life. If I had to identify the most important thing I did, the greatest contribution I've made, it would be taking part in the writing of the Constitution." States Victor Fischer, who sees being part of the writing of the Constitution of Alaska as a peak moment.⁶¹

Alaskan statehood advocates had enlisted the aid of constitutional experts from other parts of the United States; however, many of these people came forward and volunteered. The importance of the task of writing the constitution was not lost on the participants of the convention. In his 2012 book *To Russia with Love an Alaskan's Journey* Victor Fischer writes

⁶⁰ John B. "Jack" Coghill. *Growing up in Alaska* (Juneau: Kayto Communications Incorporated, 2009), 211 & 213.

⁶¹ Deborah Tobola. *Writing a Constitution* (Unknown: LitSite Alaska, 2000). 1.

Everyone we talked with agreed that the Constitutional Convention Election is probably the most important election we'll ever participate in. As one woman put it: It's the election we'll be telling our grandchildren about. The delegates we elect must write a constitution that will serve many future generations of Alaskans... That the Alaska Constitution is exceptional is not just the opinion of a proud old man. Experts at the time and since have noted our constitution's brevity and clarity and the way in which it avoided difficulties created by the charters of other states.⁶²

2.8 Consequences of Statehood

The convention, the constitution, and ultimately Alaskan statehood were consequences of the efforts of statehood advocates. After Alaska became a state, the movement and the convention became part of Alaskans' memory, a story that would be told and retold. Like Alaskans during the time of the constitutional convention, many early Alaskan pioneers shared the dreams of statehood with the mid-Twentieth Century advocates. For example, James Wickersham served as the district judge for Alaska, until he resigned in 1908 to run as a delegate for the District of Alaska in 1909. He would continue to serve as a delegate when Alaska became a territory in 1912, and he served as a Republican throughout his political career.⁶³ He is considered to be one of the first Alaskan statehood advocates. However, during the convention, the Democrats serving as delegates were in the majority. Nonetheless, efforts were made by the majority to have people from both parties serving together. This attitude of non-partisanship was prevalent throughout the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and Wickersham was one of the most vocal and driven advocates, for he had specific plans for Alaskan statehood. He was not alive at the time of the convention in 1955. In her 1979 book *Frontier Politics: Alaska's James Wickersham*, Evangeline Atwood writes

⁶² Victor Fischer. *To Russia with Love an Alaskan's Journey* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2012), 144 & 171.

⁶³ U.S. Congress. bioguide.congress.gov (accessed November 1, 2015)

Statehood for the territory had been a longtime dream of Wickersham's. In a speech to the Seward Society of the Juneau high school on March 30, 1907, he predicted that one day four sovereign states would be carved out of the territory – the state of Sitka, with its capital at Juneau; the state of Alaska, with its capital at Valdez; the state of Seward, with the capital at Nome; and the state of Tanana, with its capital at Fairbanks.⁶⁴

The buildup of memory and experiences in the move toward statehood began in 1916 with Alaska's first statehood bill, put forth by James Wickersham. In the 1990 book *Going Up in Flames the Promises and Pledges of Alaska Statehood Under Attack*, Malcolm Roberts writes

In 1916, the first statehood bill was introduced in Congress by Delegate James Wickersham. While this act was perceived as merely a gesture at the time, it planted the seed. In the early 1940s Delegate Anthony Dimond and territorial Governor Ernest Gruening began aggressively to pursue the statehood cause. As time passed, other individuals became the torchbearers for statehood, including Delegate E.L. "Bob" Bartlett, newspaper publisher Robert Atwood, attorney Mildred R. Herman, Helen Fischer, who later served in the State House, and later territorial governors Frank Heintzleman and Mike Stepovich. Statehood was achieved against tremendous odds. Alaska had been the pawn of the absentee commercial interests from the time of its purchase from Russia in 1867.⁶⁵

Some of the writers of the history of Alaskan statehood also worked with the architects of Alaskan statehood, such as Mary Council who wrote an unpublished four-volume set, *Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back (Bob Bartlett and Alaska Statehood)* in 1969 and was the secretary to Bob Bartlett. She writes about the statehood movement as a series of struggles to overcome.⁶⁶ Using information that she gleaned from Bartlett, his letters and correspondence, and contacts with other architects of Alaskan statehood, Council wrote a first-hand account of

⁶⁴ Evangeline Atwood. *Frontier Politics: Alaska's James Wickersham* (Portland: Binford & Mort, 1979), 306.

⁶⁵ The Commonwealth North Federal-State Relations Committee and Malcolm B. Roberts, ed. *Going Up in Flames the Promises and Pledges of Alaska Statehood Under Attack* (Anchorage: Alaska Pacific University Press, 1990), 39.

⁶⁶ Mary Council. *"Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back" (Bob Bartlett and Alaska Statehood)* (Maryland: Unpublished, 1969), Book 3.

the Alaskan statehood movement.⁶⁷ Council explains Alaska's struggle for statehood by its supporters, and she notes that "the Alaska Statehood cause is based upon the good old American desire for equality in citizenship."⁶⁸ Council sees the Alaska Constitutional Convention as a capstone for the supporters of statehood, and the constitution that was created by the convention.⁶⁹ Council writes

...The constitution was exceedingly efficient because it did not reflect regional or group interests and sifted the best out of the United States experience. They said it came closer to carry out the classic pattern of separation of powers laid down by the founding fathers than any other state constitution through the provision of three strong branches with proper checks and balances.⁷⁰

The checks and balances that Council writes about in her book are written about by other historians, and are an important element of both the statehood movement and the delegates and staff at the Alaska Constitutional Convention.⁷¹

Momentum was not the only factor in the statehood movement. In 1969, Council wrote about the struggles between two of the statehood movement's primary architects, Bob Bartlett and Ernest Gruening.⁷² Almost forty years later, in 2008, Erik A. White would write about the same relationship in his thesis *Bob Bartlett and Ernest Gruening: The Relationship That Helped Alaska Become a State*.⁷³ White illustrates the depths of Bartlett and Gruening complicated

⁶⁷ Mary Council. *"Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back" (Bob Bartlett and Alaska Statehood)*, Books 1-4.

⁶⁸ Mary Council. *"Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back" (Bob Bartlett and Alaska Statehood)*, Book 3, 240.

⁶⁹ Mary Council. *"Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back" (Bob Bartlett and Alaska Statehood)*, Book 3,

⁷⁰ Mary Council. *"Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back" (Bob Bartlett and Alaska Statehood)*, Book 3, 322.

⁷¹ Mary Council. *"Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back" (Bob Bartlett and Alaska Statehood)*, Books 1-4.

⁷² Mary Council. *"Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back" (Bob Bartlett and Alaska Statehood)*, Book 3, 236-351.

⁷³ Erik A. White. *Bob Bartlett and Ernest Gruening: The Relationship That Helped Alaska Become a State* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2008), 1-127.

relationship that began as a mentorship and then evolved into a competition between two leading statesmen.⁷⁴ However, this relationship was essential to the Alaskan Statehood Movement.

Historian and author John Whitehead connected people and place together in his 2004 book, *Completing the Union Alaska, Hawai'i, and the Battle for Statehood*, and conducted extensive interviews and completed historical research, writing in detail about the history and emotion of the convention.⁷⁵ Whitehead's book conveys the momentum that developed in the early 1950s for Alaskan statehood.⁷⁶ Whitehead writes

The stillborn discussions of the previous five years gained energy and momentum in 1954 as part of that populist phase in which little men and women all over the territory became involved in the statehood movement.⁷⁷

The historical perspective of many historians cited in this project details the struggles and the momentum of the ten to fifteen years of work toward statehood, illustrated by Whitehead.⁷⁸

Ernest Gruening was one of the foremost advocates of statehood for Alaska. In his 1968 book *Gruening of Alaska: the Dynamic Career of a Remarkable U.S. Senator*, Sherwood Ross writes

Gruening seized every national and international development as an opportunity to bring Alaska into the center of the stage for attention. When national necessity made it essential that defense be built, he dramatized the need and encouraged action that would bring coincidental benefits to the permanent economy of the territory.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Erik A. White. *Bob Bartlett and Ernest Gruening: The Relationship That Helped Alaska Become a State*, 1-127.

⁷⁵ John S. Whitehead. *Completing the Union Alaska, Hawai'i, and the Battle for Statehood* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 1-438.

⁷⁶ John S. Whitehead. *Completing the Union Alaska, Hawai'i, and the Battle for Statehood*, 1-438.

⁷⁷ John S. Whitehead. *Completing the Union Alaska, Hawai'i, and the Battle for Statehood*, 237.

⁷⁸ John S. Whitehead. *Completing the Union Alaska, Hawai'i, and the Battle for Statehood*, 1-438.

⁷⁹ Sherwood Ross. *Gruening of Alaska the Dynamic Career of a Remarkable U.S. Senator* (New York: Best Books, Inc., 1968), 148 & 149.

Claus Naske wrote about the battle for statehood in his book *49 at Last! The Battle for Alaska Statehood*, published in 2009.⁸⁰ Naske writes

...On April... (of)... Gruening was the last of twenty-two witnesses to testify. The former governor reiterated his thesis that the federal government had neglected the territory. Alaskans had conquered nature, but had been frustrated in their battles with bureaucracy, he stated. With that the hearings closed.⁸¹

The Alaskan Statehood Movement accelerated after World War II. In his 2006 book *Frigid Embrace Politics, Economics and Environment in Alaska*, Stephen Haycox writes

After World War II the quest for statehood would dominate Alaska public policy discussion and action. To provide an irrefutable factual basis from which to construct a campaign to persuade Congress to grant statehood, the territorial legislature placed (a) referendum on the question on the general election ballot in 1946. The results were encouraging for statehood advocates, 9,634 (58.5 percent) voting in favor, 6,822 against.⁸²

The increase in population, brought about by World War II, helped to achieve momentum in the Alaskan Statehood Movement. In his 2004 book *Ernest Gruening Alaska's Greatest Governor*, Claus Naske writes

We are part of a great purpose, a great cohesive force, a great movement—to demonstrate by our actions that whatever may be its faults, the democratic system is the best system yet devised by man. Uniquely among all areas under the Stars and Stripes, Alaska was located most closely to the Soviet Union, which he described as the police state which represents a way of life wholly antithetical to ours and repugnant to everything we hold dear. Our response to that challenge is not to be found in verbal denunciation... but in the creation of contrast, in the determination to establish within the view of all mankind a living and vibrant demonstration of the American system, with its clear manifestation that it is more productive of human happiness, and therefore more enduring than any totalitarian system.⁸³

⁸⁰ Claus-M. Naske. *49 at Last! The Battle for Alaska Statehood* (Washington: Epicenter Press, Inc., 2009), 1-351.

⁸¹ Claus-M. Naske. *49 at Last! The Battle for Alaska Statehood*, 184-185.

⁸² Stephen Haycox. *Frigid Embrace Politics, Economics and Environment in Alaska* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2006), 74.

⁸³ Claus-M. Naske. *Ernest Gruening Alaska's Greatest Governor* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2004), 166.

The consequences of non-partisan actions such as the equal involvement on committees of Democrats and Republicans at the beginning of the Alaska Constitutional Convention allowed for the creation of a model constitution. By the beginning of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, in November of 1955, the delegates were committed to making the convention as non-partisan as possible. On their 2004 website *Alaska History and Cultural Studies*, the Alaska Humanities Forum write

Democrats outnumbered Republicans in the gathering, but elections to the convention were conducted on a nonpartisan basis and most delegates, put the good of Alaska ahead of everything else. The delegates wanted to prove to Congress and the rest of the country that Alaska was mature enough to govern itself. It was important that the convention took place before statehood, and that it was held in the university setting, so that people were free to be creative and philosophical in designing the new state government.⁸⁴

A great many people were needed to design the new state government, and two of them were Bob Bartlett and Ernest Gruening. The relationship of Bartlett and Gruening was not an isolated incident in the relationships that benefited the Alaska Constitutional Convention and Alaskan statehood, for many people worked together to create the state of Alaska. The Delegates and staff worked together in their creation of the Alaska Constitution, and fifty years later, memories of the event are as strong as ever. In her 2008 article *A Constitution for the Ages*, Melissa DeV Vaughn write

⁸⁴ Alaska Humanities Forum. "Governing Alaska The Constitutional Convention" *Alaska History & Cultural Studies* (Unknown: Alaska Humanities Forum, 2004), 3. www.akhistorycourse.org/article.php?artID=222 (Accessed 3/26/12)

For Fischer, Coghill and Hurley, it is an especially momentous occasion. The path to statehood was hard-earned. They are among a handful of surviving statesmen and women who were part of an important—if not the most important—step in attaining statehood for Alaska: crafting the state’s constitution. The 75-day Constitutional Convention was attended by elected delegates, clerks and advisers, all with one goal: show the federal government that Alaska was capable of taking care of itself. There were 49 men and six women in the 55-member delegation. Fischer and Coghill were two of the delegates; Hurley was the chief clerk recording the proceedings.⁸⁵

The memories of the lack of the constitutional convention were still strong in 2009, during the fiftieth anniversary of Alaskan statehood,⁸⁶ contributing to Alaska’s historical record of a lack of partisan politics at the convention, over the last fifty-six years.⁸⁷ In 2009, Dermot Cole wrote the essay *The Road to Alaska’s Statehood* in which he writes”

The decision (to host the convention at the university near Fairbanks) turned out to be fortuitous, as the convention that met through the winter of 1955-56 was remarkably free of partisan politics and back-room dealings. Delegates said that the canned salmon industry never took the convention as seriously as a legislative proceeding, and the campus setting contributed to a spirit of camaraderie.⁸⁸

The opportunities for historians and writers to interview those involved have become almost non-existent. Most of the participants are dead. Writers who have interviewed participants on Alaskan statehood history and the Alaska Constitutional Convention tell the story through an oral history format. In the telling and retelling, these memories convey strong emotion, which in turn preserves the memory of the events. Memory is a key component in oral history, and thanks to historians and writers in the past, these memories are part of a permanent record.

⁸⁵ Melissa DeVaughn. “A Constitution for The Ages” *The Alaska Sportsman* (alaskamagazine.com June 2008), 35 & 36. www.alaskawriters.com/membersites/memberuploads/mdevaughn/Constitution_presentation.pdf

⁸⁶ Dermot Cole. “The Road to Alaska’s Statehood” *Celebrating Alaska’s 50th Anniversary of Statehood 1959-2009* (Florida: Faircount Media Group, 2009), 17-24.

⁸⁷ Dermot Cole. “The Road to Alaska’s Statehood” *Celebrating Alaska’s 50th Anniversary of Statehood 1959-2009*, 17-24.

⁸⁸ Dermot Cole. “The Road to Alaska’s Statehood” *Celebrating Alaska’s 50th Anniversary of Statehood 1959-2009*, 23.

Chapter 3 Methodology-The Living History and the Human Perspective of the Construction of the Alaska Constitution

3.1 Introduction

In their roles as delegates, clerk, and librarian, Jack Coghill, Vic Fischer, Katie Hurley, and D.A. Bartlett brought different social and political perspectives to the Alaska Constitutional Convention; however, like others involved with the convention, individual ideologies were set aside for the larger goal, statehood for Alaska. The Alaska Constitutional Convention is remembered in both stories told by members and in more traditional written accounts as a piece of oral history. In reliving their memories of the convention, Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett offer their own personal narratives. The difference between Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, Bartlett, and others who were at the convention, and the more traditional written accounts, such as those recorded in some books and secondary sources, is that their oral stories give the reader a living historical perspective in more active voice. However, the limitations of such an oral history, such as the interviews with Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett can revolve around the limitations of memory. The accurate recollection of events told in oral narrative often fades with time. Oral stories and narratives of a specific event that took place at a specific time, are remembered over a period of many years. In effect, stories are re-remembered and changed over time. By using the codes and code families of thematic analysis in the interview chapters, a clear interpretation of the interviews emerges.

3.2 Methods

The researcher chose Thematic Analysis located within the Qualitative Method for analysis of the four interview chapters. This type of analysis labels each theme or word as a code. For example, how many times did Coghill say the code “people” or “convention” during

his interviews? This can be compared to how many times that Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett say the same code, thus illustrating the similarities or differences. In their book *Working with*

Qualitative Data, William J. Gibson & Andrew Brown write

...thematic analysis refers to the process of analyzing data according to commonalities, relationships and differences across a data set. The word thematic relates to the aim of searching for aggregated themes within data.⁸⁹

Each code is then assigned a code family. These are codes that share a certain commonality. In this project there is a super code, "Convention." Gibson and Brown write that a supercode is "a higher order of code that describes some relationship between two or more codes."⁹⁰

In using Thematic Analysis in this thesis, each time Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, or Bartlett said a certain word it was counted and recorded in each individual chapter. These codes or themes, in turn, formed the code families that helped to construct the chapter. Not all of the codes counted in the four interviews were the same for each chapter. Some, such as "convention" were counted in all four individuals. However, other codes such as "Freemason," were only used or counted in one of the interview chapters. The individual codes are at nexus of Thematic Analysis.

Thematic Analysis is one form of the Qualitative Method which deals with meanings and ideas, and the codes are often connected with significant historical events such as The Alaska Constitutional Convention. However, to be able to understand the large amount of material that one is privy to, the interviewer/researcher must be able to know what to do with the data. Gibson and Brown write

⁸⁹ William J. Gibson & Andrew Brown. *Working with Qualitative Data* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009), 127.

⁹⁰ William J. Gibson & Andrew Brown. *Working with Qualitative Data*, 131.

(The three components of qualitative work are), **Description** involves producing an account that stays close to the original data... **Analysis** involves going beyond these largely descriptive iterations and systematically producing an account of key factors and relationships producing insights about.⁹¹

The most significant part of thematic analysis that will be presented in this study will be through the analysis of the interviews. While the other two components of description and interpretation are extremely important, the analysis of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett will be the central focus of this study. Analysis is the most important aspect of this project because it connects the four separate interviews together and shows the commonalities and the differences between the four individuals. There are many different kinds of analysis, but the interviewer has chosen one that will be the focus of this research, is thematic analysis of the commonalities that are found in the four different interviews that are the focus of this research. The presence of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett at the Alaska Constitutional Convention was a significant commonality. That they were there with purpose is another commonality. This commonality becomes part of the structure. Gibson and Brown write

Researchers can use key themes within their analysis as a structural resource to help them tell the story of their data. The analytic concepts may form section titles within a data discussion that are addressed independently of each other... There are also examples of researchers choosing to organize their work around the questions that are asked in an interview, presenting and organizing their data in relation to particular thematic issues dealt with in the interview questions.⁹²

Analysis is central to this thesis, because it is important to the data contained in the interview transcripts of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett. The themes, or codes are extrapolated and form the basis of the analysis, which in turn tells a story of memories of the Alaska Constitutional Convention.

⁹¹ William J. Gibson & Andrew Brown. *Working with Qualitative Data*, 5.

⁹² William J. Gibson & Andrew Brown. *Working with Qualitative Data*, 196 & 197.

3.3 The Oral Narrative Process

3.3.1 How the Interviews of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett Contribute to the Oral History of Alaskan Statehood

Alaska Constitutional Convention delegates Jack Coghill and Vic Fischer, and Alaska Constitutional Convention staff members Katie Hurley and D.A. Bartlett's interviews contribute to the oral history of Alaskan Statehood. In his 2008 book *Living with Stories Telling, Re-Telling, And Remembering*, editor William Schneider writes

When we open our ears and our minds to oral tradition and personal narratives, we add layers of meaning to the oral history accounts we have stored on our shelves...to really understand a story, we need to listen to how it is used and recognize how each new narrative bears the mark of the present and a particular reason for telling.⁹³

Thus, the narrative stories of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett are not only important in the telling, but in the retelling. Each time an individual hears or reads their stories, he or she will gain a deeper understanding of the Alaska Constitutional Convention and the creation of the state of Alaska, because the story and memory is being recreated and developed. Schneider writes that to make connections between the past and the present, we must use oral stories as a form of the historical record.⁹⁴ He further writes

When we live with stories and actually think about how we use narrative, we see how accounts are a resource to talk about what we think is important; they are our way of relating experience to the present, and we recognize that stories are as much about the present as the past.⁹⁵

⁹³ William Schneider, ed. *Living with Stories Telling, Re-Telling, and Remembering* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2008), 1.

⁹⁴ William Schneider, ed. *Living with Stories Telling, Re-Telling, and Remembering*, 1-175.

⁹⁵ William Schneider, ed. *Living with Stories Telling, Re-Telling, and Remembering*, 2.

The living connection between an event such as the drafting of the Alaska Constitution, a place such as the location of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and the oral histories of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett can be understood through a series of questions and answers.

Schneider writes

Oral History is the tape recording of a knowledgeable person, by questions and answers, about what he/she did or observed of an event or events or way of life of historical interest.⁹⁶

The use of narrative in these stories contributes to a greater understanding and recognition of the history of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and connects the past with the present. The telling of the oral narratives of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett conveys history, both as a part of oral history of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and as the oral history of four individuals. This, then, is a part of history.

3.3.2 Written Accounts

Some written accounts of the constitution offer only a broader historical overview of events, instead of the specific thematic/narrative point-of-view perspectives of oral narratives discussed in this thesis. In their 1994 book *Alaska Politics and Government*, Gerald McBeath and Thomas Morehouse write

The struggle for statehood is part of the distant past in most American states, but it is a living memory in Alaska. It also represented a rare period of unity in Alaska's history.⁹⁷

The unity that McBeath and Morehouse write about is an important element in the success of the Alaska Constitutional Convention. However, their written account lacks the depth of understanding that the oral narratives of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett bring to the

⁹⁶ William Schneider, ed. *Living with Stories Telling, Re-Telling, and Remembering*, 3.

⁹⁷ Gerald McBeath and Thomas Morehouse. *Alaska Politics and Government* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 308.

history of Alaska. These oral narratives, and others like them, offer a more complete picture of the convention.

3.3.3 The Strengths and Limitations of the Oral Narrative Process

The narratives of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett illustrate the strengths of the oral narrative process. The delegates and staff offer a unique perspective on the convention and the writing of the Alaska Constitution. The delegates and staff, who were involved in this historical event, then contributes to the historical record of the time. Oral narrative adds depth to any project, thawing a moment frozen in time, so that it can be examined and studied, and, in turn, benefit future research projects. In conducting the research for this particular project, the writer extrapolated different themes from the interviews of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett, and then used these themes or codes to construct individual chapters. The oral narratives added context for the analysis of the four interview chapters. The retelling of these stories keeps the oral narratives of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett in a form of living memory. This living memory becomes part of what defines Alaskans as a people. Schneider writes

We choose to tell stories, one to another; they become part of our social fabric, ways to share with each other, but they are given and received with hope and concern about how they will be interpreted and retold. Often we only partially and crudely understand what we are told, so we are continually reevaluating what we know, how we know what we know, and what we think is appropriate to talk and write about.⁹⁸

An interviewer must pay attention to the concerns of the interviewees in the telling of their narratives and their stories. Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett were very concerned that they did not sound foolish, and that their stories would be told with respect. During their interviews, Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett expressed these concerns. For example, at his

⁹⁸ Willian Schneider. *So They Understand* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2002), 16.

last interview, Coghill had his son, Senator John Coghill, with him. Fischer requested a copy of his transcripts, and was assured he would receive a copy of them and his chapter when this project was completed. At the beginning of her first interview, Hurley said that her son was concerned that she not be made to appear foolish. And during all three of her recorded interviews, Bartlett expressed sorrow at how her memory had slowed or faded. Respect is important in any relationship, but it is especially significant between the interviewer and the interviewee. It was important, therefore, to demonstrate to the interviewees a certain amount of responsibility and respect both to them as individuals, and to the Alaska Constitutional Convention and the formation of the Alaskan state.

As the interviews progressed, the limitations of the oral narrative process, centered on memory, became clear. This raises the question: how reliable is an individual's memory? When interviewees reach the age of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett, discrepancies in memory become significant. At the start of their first recorded interviews, Coghill was eighty-five, Fischer was eighty-eight, Hurley was ninety-one, and Bartlett was seventy-eight. However, in cross-examining all four individuals, their narratives exhibited many commonalities. In other words, their discrepancies can be marginalized. In itself, memory can make the oral narrative unreliable; however, the human mind has infinite capacity for adaptability and if the researcher is patient, interviews can be conducted to extrapolate a great deal of information. This thesis was conducted with that in mind, and with an awareness that these oral stories are significant not only in the past, but in the present and in the future.

3.3.4 Connection to Place

Memories can be awakened by a connection to place; this is very much the case with Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett and their presence at the Alaska Constitutional Convention.

In an article *The Singular Event and the Everyday Routine: The Interplay of History and Culture in the Shaping of Memory*, on his interviews with convention participants, Dr. John S. Whitehead writes

I quickly became struck not so much with the answers to the specific questions on state development as with the emotional intensity, the precision of detail, the almost reverential tone with which people described their participation in the statehood movement, particularly in the 1955-56 convention... Emotion is often a strong factor in securing the memory in the minds of participants.⁹⁹

Like the participants Whitehead interviewed, throughout their interviews, Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett spoke with emotion about their involvement in the Alaska Constitutional Convention. At times their voices were halting as they formed their thoughts into words, and at other times they moved forward in a precise manner.

3.3.5 Interviews

The interviews of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett took time to set up. They required formal introductions from other people. Ms. Michelle Hawkins arranged the introduction of the interviewer with Jack Coghill. An informal interview then took place with Coghill over the phone before the first meeting took place at Gulliver's Bookstore. The next two interviews were set-up between the interviewer and Coghill, and the last interview, interview, in February 2012, was arranged between the interviewer and Coghill's son, Senator John Coghill.

In regards to the interview with Vic Fischer, Dr. Cindy Hardy arranged a meeting between the interviewer and Elyse Guttenberg, whose father was married to Vic Fischer's ex-wife. After a phone conversation with Guttenberg, the interviewer was able to schedule a formal

⁹⁹ John S. Whitehead. "The Singular Event and the Everyday Routine: The Interplay of History and Culture in the Shaping of Memory" *Interpreting Alaska's History: an anthology*, Mary Mangusso ed. (Anchorage: Alaska Pacific University Press, 1989), 418 & 423.

recorded phone interview with Fischer. The recorded phone interview took place in the office of University of Alaska Alumni director Joe Hayes.

The interviewer scheduled both of the recorded phone interviews with Katie Hurley. After an informal phone conversation between the interviewer and Hurley, a time was established for a formal recorded phone interview. After the completion of the first interview, a second interview was established between the interviewer and Hurley.

Dr. Cindy Hardy arranged the introduction of the interviewer with Bartlett. An informal conversation took place over the phone between the interviewer and Bartlett before the first formal recorded interview at the old University Park Elementary School in April 2012. The second interview in September 2012 was arranged between the interviewer and Bartlett, and was also formally recorded. The second interview took place at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Rasmussen Library. The third interview took place in February of 2013 and was formally recorded at the location of the second interview.

3.3.6 Reasons for Each Interview

The interviewer's choice of Alaska Constitutional Convention delegates Jack Coghill and Vic Fischer, chief clerk Katie Hurley, and librarian D.A. Bartlett as interviewees, is directly related to their involvement in the community of the convention. All four of the above individuals learned the foundations for their ideas on community from different aspects of their upbringing, such as their family or the environment in which they were raised.

As a Freemason and Convention delegate, Coghill's first person narrative was essential to understand the point-of-view of one of the Alaska Constitution's authors. Technically, Coghill did not become a Freemason until 1962; however, his father was a Mason, and, during his non-

recorded interviews he spoke about the tenets of Freemasonry in relation to how he was raised.¹⁰⁰ This is relevant for historical record because it helps the researcher to be aware of the historical time period that Coghill lived in. Not only does Coghill represent the ideologies of Freemasonry, he represents a conservative Republican point-of-view. His nickname, “Mr. Republican,” supports this. The Republicans were in the minority at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. A precursory narrative analysis of Coghill’s interviews revealed to the researcher that Coghill’s self-help attitude was prevalent among the delegates and staff at the convention, and would influence them greatly in their creation of the Alaska Constitution.

The interviewer’s choice to interview Alaska Constitutional Convention delegate Vic Fischer was revealed more clearly after preliminary analysis. Fischer’s interview represented the journey, both tangible and intangible, that many of the delegates had taken to arrive at the convention. The interviewer felt that Fischer’s liberal politics offered an interesting juxtaposition to Coghill’s conservative ones, and was used to illustrate the diversity of personal belief that was at the convention.

The choice to include the interview of Katie Hurley came about because she was the Chief Clerk of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and this gave her a unique perspective of the events that unfolded. Her oral narrative offered the interviewer the opportunity to view the Alaska Constitutional Convention as a whole entity. Hurley was one of two staff people interviewed for this thesis. The roles of staff members were vital to the success of the Alaska Constitutional Convention as a whole. Hurley brought a great deal of experience to her job, which she learned from working with Ernest Gruening and other Alaskan Statehood architects.

¹⁰⁰ Jack Coghill, interview by Leslie Drumhiller, 2009, Fairbanks: Gulliver’s Books.

At first, the interview's choice of Alaska Constitutional Convention research and librarian D.A. Bartlett was her connection to her father. Upon closer analysis, after the first interview in April of 2012, it quickly became obvious to the interviewer that Bartlett was a key contributor in her own right. She worked for Hurley as a clerk and was a researcher and librarian at the convention. Bartlett witnessed the historical Alaska Constitutional Convention in 1955/56 and that is the key reason for her involvement in this project. During much of Bartlett's third interview, Bartlett talked about correspondence with her father. This aspect is the least known of Bartlett's contributions to the Alaska Constitutional Convention and the Alaskan Statehood Movement.

3.3.7 Interview Place Set-up

The interviews of Alaska Constitutional Convention delegate Jack Coghill took place over a period of several years. The first two interviews took place in the year 2009 at Gulliver's Book Store in Fairbanks, Alaska and were not recorded. They were informal conversations that took place at two book signings at Gulliver's and in the café upstairs. During the second interview, Coghill's son Jeff sat and joined in the discussion. The third interview was a formal recorded interview, and took place at the Jester's Palace in Nenana, Alaska in August of 2010. Present at the interview were Ms. Michelle Hawkins, who had introduced the interviewer to Coghill, her husband Sam Medsker, and Even Miller who was doing the recording. The final interview took place in February of 2012 at Coghill's home in North Pole, Alaska. Also present at this interview was Coghill's son, Senator John Coghill. This was also a formal recorded interview.

The single formal recorded interview of Alaska Constitutional Convention delegate Vic Fischer took place in September of 2012 over the telephone, in the office of then University of

Alaska Alumni Director Joe Hayes on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus. Fischer resides in Anchorage, Alaska, and the interviewer resides in Fairbanks, Alaska.

The two formal recorded interviews of Alaska Constitutional Convention Chief Clerk Katie Hurley took place September and October of 2012 over the telephone, in the office of then, University of Alaska Director Joe Hayes on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus. Hurley resides in Wasilla, Alaska.

The first two interviews of Alaska Constitutional Convention researcher and librarian D.A. Bartlett took place over a period of five months. The first was a formal recorded interview that took place in the spring 2012 in a small copy room. The second interview was also formally recorded and took place in September, 2012, at the Rasmuson Library at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in a private conference room on the fifth floor. The third interview was formally recorded, and took place on February 19, 2013, in the same library conference room.

3.3.8 Recording Device

The recording device that was used on all of the recorded interviews was an Olympus Digital Voice Recorder WS-110. There were several reasons for the selection of this particular recording device. First and foremost, the quality of the sound was, at the time, among the best. Secondly, this voice recorder is smaller and lighter than the average modern cell phone, so the size did not intimidate the interviewees. Thirdly, this particular device contains five folders and offers a minimum of fifteen hours of recorded interviews. This meant that several interviews could be stored at the same time on this particular digital recorder, keeping the individual interviews separated and organized. The interviews of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett are currently stored in the following locations: on the computer, external hard drive, cds, and in hard

copy of the transcript in the home of the interviewer; and on cd and hard copy of the transcript in the office of Dr. Cindy Hardy.

3.3.9 Interview Questions

The interview questions that were asked of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett were created by the interviewer. In August of 2010 the key questions asked during the first formal recorded interview of Coghill were:

What did you do for a living/work?
When did you go into politics?
What were your goals for political office?
How did you become involved in the Alaska Constitutional Convention?
Did your membership in the Freemasons influence your work in drafting the Alaska Constitution?
What is your idea of community?

In February of 2012, during the last formal recorded interview the key questions asked of Coghill were:

Tell me about the weather at the beginning of the Convention?
How is the Alaska Constitution the people's constitution?
Why is it important to talk about our/Alaska's Constitution?
Tell me about your relationship with Alaska Constitutional Convention President Bill Egan?
You write in your book about Vic Fischer speaking of the camaraderie that existed at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. (202-Chapter 11) In your own words, would you talk about this camaraderie?
What were your responsibilities on the finance committee?

Some of the significant questions that were asked of Alaska Constitutional Convention delegate Vic Fischer during his one formal recorded interview on September 21, 2012 were:

How did you become involved in the Alaska Constitutional Convention?
When you arrived at the Alaska Constitutional Convention, would you describe the mood of the delegates, and other staff members?
Jack Coghill wrote in his book *Growing up Alaska* that you spoke of the camaraderie that existed at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. Would you talk more about this camaraderie?
Was Article I put in the Alaska Constitution at the beginning or the end of the convention?
How is the Alaska Constitution the people's constitution?
Why is it important to talk about our/the Alaska Constitution?
Do you think that the Alaska Constitution is as important document today as it was in 1955/56

when the authors were doing the writing? Why?
Is the Alaska Constitution relevant in the Twenty-First Century? Why? How?

Alaska Constitutional Convention Chief Clerk Katie Hurley had been the secretary to Ernest Gruening. There were two formal recorded interviews with Hurley in October of 2012.

The key questions that were asked during the first one were:

How did you become involved in the Alaska Constitutional Convention?
What was the atmosphere at the beginning of the Alaska Constitutional Convention?
What was the relationship between Bob Bartlett and his daughter Doris Ann?
Did they communicate with each other during the convention?

During Hurley's second formal recorded interview on October 26, 2012, some of the key questions were:

Why were people of different ideologies/belief systems able to work together to write the Alaska Constitution?
How is the Alaska Constitution the people's constitution?
Do you think the Alaska Constitution is as important a document today as it was in 1955/56 when the authors were doing the writing?
Is the Alaska Constitution relevant in the Twenty-First Century? Why?

One of the primary architects of the Alaskan Statehood Movement was Bob Bartlett, and it was for this reason that the first formal recorded interview was arranged with his daughter Dr. D.A. Bartlett. The key questions in her April 2012 interview were:

What did you do for a living and for your life's work?
What is your idea of community?
How did your father (Bob Bartlett) influence you in your life?
Why did you attend the Alaska Constitutional Convention?
How is the Alaska Constitution the people's constitution?
Do you think that the Alaska Constitution is as important a document today as it was in 1955/56 when the authors were doing the writing?
What role did community organizations play in politics?
What role did community organizations play at the Alaska Constitutional Convention?
What role will community organizations play in Alaska's future?

During the second formal recorded Bartlett interview in September of 2012, the key questions asked were:

When you arrived at the Alaska Constitutional Convention, would you describe the mood of the delegates and other staff members?
Who were the primary architects of Alaskan Statehood?
Would you tell me about the letters that you sent your father (Bob Bartlett) in Washington, while you were at the convention?
What from your letters were included in the Alaskan Statehood Movement?

During the third formal recorded Bartlett interview in February of 2013, several key questions asked were:

What in general did you hope to convey to your father every time you wrote to him?
And, in the feelings that you had about what you were doing at the Alaska Constitutional Convention that gave you this feeling of euphoria, how did that influence what you wrote to your father?
Did your father respond to your letters?
Was your father grateful to your letters?
So did they (delegates and other staff members) treat you as the kid of Bob Bartlett or did they treat you as a colleague?

The answers to these questions contributed a significant aspect to the history of the Alaska Constitutional Convention and the state of Alaska.

3.4 Thematic Analysis

After the completion of the interviews, they were transcribed, and the researcher set about to extrapolate the codes and code families from each individual interview. The codes used were taken directly from each individual interview. The result was a group of empirical codes. Gibson and Brown write

Empirical codes emerge through the exploration of data... It could be that the data produced through the interviews reveals a number of sub-categories within the general area... Empirical codes may also emerge as distinct interests that were unforeseen in the original formulation of interests... This relates to a certain point: all codes are simply categories of data that represent a thematic concern. Where new thematic concerns emerge as distinct interests that were unforeseen in the original formulation of interests... This relates to a certain point: all codes are simply categories of data that represent a thematic concern. Where new thematic concerns emerge through data, researchers need to reflect on the relationship between that concern and the data they have generated/could generate.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ William J. Gibson. *Working with Qualitative Data*, 133.

After transcribing the interviews, this researcher extracted the codes from the transcripts. The codes were then grouped into code families, and there was a section of one super code, “convention.” Each code was then counted within the transcripts. The counting of the codes and code families helped the researcher extrapolate the significant themes from the interviews. This was then incorporated into each chapter including the analysis chapter. The analysis was then created as a comparison between the interviews of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.

The analysis of the interviews of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett revealed three distinct themes: the creation of a non-partisan body at the Alaska Constitutional Convention, the camaraderie of the delegates and staff at the convention, and how the four interviewees represented some ideas of gender equality at the convention. The analysis illustrates how, far then, the Alaska Constitution is a living document created by the delegates, both men and women, for a future state. Part of the process is revealed in this thesis.

Chapter 4 John B. “Jack” Coghill

4.1 The Codes and Code Families of Jack Coghill

**Freemason (cf) [29]*

Freemason (c)

Mason (c)

Masonic (c)

Scottish Rite (c)

Sojourners (c)

Jesters (c)

Fraternity (c)

The organization (c)

*This code family is only specific to
Coghill, and not Fischer, Huley, and Bartlett.

Family (cf) [58]

Family (c)

Father (c)

Grandfather (c)

Dad (c)

He (c)

People (cf) [22]

People (c)

Everybody (c)

Principles (cf) [12]

Camaraderie (c)

To build a civil government

Principles (c)

Philosophy (c)*

*This is from a quote on basic structure of a Scottish family.

Structure (cf) [30]

Structure (c)

Structure of the Inner Soul (c)

Institutional (c)

Apportionment (c)

Whole (c)

Middle (c)

Christian (c)

Political (c)

Territorial (c)

Family (c)

Masonic (c)

Government (c)
Community (c)
Property (c)

**Work (cf) [40]*

Work (c)
Community (c)
Society (c)
Store (c)
Butcher (c)
Printer (c)
Schoolhouse Johnny (c)
Legislature (c)

*I told my kids, if you're gonna' put your feet under my table, you're going to work for it. It is important to aspire to your goals, and work hard. If you are going to work, then you should do your best.

Politics (cf) [7]

Politics (c)
Political (c)
Politician (c)
*Tribute to Egan

Alaska Constitutional Convention {super code} (cf) [44]

Alaska Constitutional Convention (c)
Convention (c)
Communities {connected w/the convention}(c)
Reapportionment (c)
Apportionment (c)

Alaska Constitution (cf) [7]

Alaska Constitution (c)
state constitution (c)
constitution (c)

4.2 Introduction

There are a significant number of codes and themes that are used in the five pages of Coghill's 2009 non-recorded interview notes and twenty-two pages of the typed transcripts of his two recorded interviews. Some of these codes are grouped together in code families, indicating that they either mean the same thing or they share a strong connection.

4.3 Freemason

The code family "Freemason" contains the codes: "Freemason," "Mason," "Masonic," "Scottish Rite," "Sojourners," "Jesters," "Fraternity," and "the organization." In his non-recorded interviews Coghill uses the code family "Freemason" fifteen times, and in his two recorded interviews Coghill uses the code family "Freemason" fourteen times. The high usage of this code family shows its importance to Jack Coghill. Reflections on Freemasonry are woven throughout the first three interviews of this project. For example, Coghill states "The principles of the organization make you a good man."¹⁰²

4.4 Principles and Philosophy

The code family "Freemason" is closely connected with the smaller code "principle." Coghill used the code "principle" six times in his non-recorded interviews, and one time in his two recorded interviews. For example, Coghill says "Every day (the) same. (I) live by rules and structure."¹⁰³ The code "philosophy" follows the code "principles" quite closely and connects itself to the ideals of the 1950s. This, in turn, connects Coghill to the memories of his father and how he was raised. Coghill talks about the principles and philosophy of growing up as the son of a Scot. He says

¹⁰² Jack Coghill, Interview by [Leslie Drumhiller], Fall 2009. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁰³ Jack Coghill, Interview by [Leslie Drumhiller], Fall 2009. Fairbanks, Alaska.

I was reared in the basic structure of the Scottish family. And that is, when they said jump, you didn't ask how high. You just jumped as high as you could, because that was their philosophy. Their philosophy (is) what I want to tell you, I want to tell you once.¹⁰⁴

Coghill uses the code “philosophy” four times in his two recorded interviews. These principles and philosophies of faith, family, Freemasonry, and his devotion to the state of Alaska have stayed with Coghill throughout his life and work, and have become part of the whole philosophy that Coghill has lived his life by, including the way he interacted with the delegates and staff at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. These philosophies are also reflected in the way that Jack Coghill interacts with other people. There is no pretense in his dealings with people. For example, during the interviews, he looked straight at the interviewer and really listened.

4.5 Family

Family and work are synonymous in Coghill's life. In both of his recorded interviews, Coghill used the code family or theme “family” fifty-eight times. The code family “family” contains the codes: “family,” “father,” “grandfather,” “dad,” and “he.” The family influence is very important to Coghill. This is also supported by Coghill following in the traditions of his father. Coghill used the words in this code family eleven times in his non-recorded interviews. This further illustrates the importance of family and service to community which has stayed with Coghill throughout his life, and explains why he went into politics, illustrated by the fact that Coghill believed so strongly in the pursuit of Alaskan statehood.

Fifty years after the convention, Coghill is still reflecting on the importance of family, place and history, and his life in Alaska. The family influence is very important to Coghill. This is supported by Coghill following in the traditions of his father. These ideas stem from Coghill's

¹⁰⁴ John B. “Jack” Coghill, interview by [Leslie Drumhiller], February 2012. North Pole.

childhood, and the way he was raised in the English as well as the Scottish traditions, which emphasized not only hard work but obedience and devotion to one's family unit. The twentieth century, during Coghill's childhood, was a time in which the happiness of children was to be developed and encouraged. However, middle-class children, such as Coghill, were also expected to complete a wide variety of chores. Coghill says

...I was the third son of a merchant...and so automatically you kind of follow that line. And what did I do? I worked in the general store, the Coghill's General Store in Nenana. I did all kinds of different chores. When it came time to take a look at what needed to be done, why I learned to be a meat cutter...My first trade you might say was that I was a butcher. I did the cutting of meat. We used to get the...frozen halves of beef in, and then we quarter them out. Now, in the grocery store, why you get everything...already quartered out for you so it makes it a lot easier.¹⁰⁵

While the English tradition of childrearing involved encouraging children in Coghill's family, to appreciate the value of hard work, there was a very specific adherence to birth order dictating what the child would be encouraged and allowed to do when they came of age. Coghill says

And so that's basically what I did...I did that until my Dad died (in) 1948...I worked in the store till such time as I started moving in to different fields...In the English tradition the oldest child in the family is dedicated to service with country...My brother Bill was a graduate of West Point, and...went on to retire a full colonel...My brother Bob who was the second, traditionally in the English fashion, was the person who was going to take over the work of the...family. And so it was up to me to find new fields, and I did that. I did different works, different fields. And that's how I got involved in politics.¹⁰⁶

4.6 Work

Another important aspect of Coghill's family is their emphasis on hard work.

Coghill used the code family "work" eight times in his two non-recorded and two recorded interviews. The code family "work" contains the codes: "work," "work ethics," "community,"

¹⁰⁵ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), August 2010. Nenana, Alaska.

¹⁰⁶ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), August 2010. Nenana, Alaska.

and “society.” As well as using the code family “work,” Coghill describes some of the jobs or work he has done throughout his life. Coghill connects work and the improvement of society closely together when he says, “You have to have been cited for bettering the society you live in.”¹⁰⁷ Coghill’s son, Jeff, explained with his father how work ethics played a significant part in developing the family’s attitude toward work

Jack: Work ethics were installed from the beginning.

Jeff: (laughs and chuckles) Nothing comes for free.

Jack: I told my kids if you’re gonna’ put your feet under my table, you’re going to work for it. It is important to aspire to your goals and work hard. If you are going to work, you should do your best...

Jeff: Dad raised me with Masonic tenants. I didn’t know it then. Once I became a Mason, I learned, and it all made sense.¹⁰⁸

John B. “Jack” Coghill began his life as the son of a storekeeper and his wife. Coghill spent his early years doing chores such as “quartering eggs...weighing out rice...sprinkle(ing) the street down with a hose to keep the dust down...(selling) PAF-pressure appliance fuel...trading fish...(and) working with furs.” These chores established a strong work ethic. Before Coghill entered politics, in his later youth and early adulthood, among other jobs, he worked as an “undertaker, beginning at age ten...night saloons (salons) man on the steamer Alice...when (he) was fifteen...(and had) an internship running projectors.” Coghill credits his work ethic to his parents. In his 2009 book *Growing up Alaska*, Coghill writes

I learned to have staying power because mom and dad would always say we don’t have a problem with your doing that, but if you get things started, you have to take it to the finish.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Jack Coghill, Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2009. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁰⁸ Jack Coghill, Interview by [Leslie Drumhiller], Fall 2009. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁰⁹ John B. “Jack” Coghill. *Growing Up Alaska*, 97.

In 1946, after World War II, Jack married the love of his life, Frances Gilbert. They had six children. Now, in 2015, their son Senator John Coghill Jr. has followed his father into politics, serving as a state senator. During the interview of February 2012, this was a great source of pride for Coghill.

4.7 Politics

The desire for Alaskan statehood became Coghill's motivation for entering serious politics. During his recorded interviews, he used the code family "politics" seven times. The code family "politics" contains the codes: "politics," "political," and "politician." This code family was very much a part of Coghill's recollections and sense of self in his recorded interviews. Because of his past experience in Alaskan territorial politics, and the fact that Coghill believed so strongly in Alaska's equality with the rest of the United States, he was asked to run as a delegate for the Alaska Constitutional Convention. In spite of his age, 31, Coghill was then recruited by convention president Bill Egan to chair the Administration committee. Coghill says

...In... '55 when it came time to run for the constitutional convention, and because they called me Schoolhouse Johnny at the time, I said "That's what I'll do." And I ran for the constitutional convention, was elected, and served...in that capacity. Bill Egan, who was a merchant from Valdez and knew my family...I had met him when I was in the Territorial Legislature...He sa(id) "Well Coghill, seeing how you're a merchant and I'm a merchant; not many of the delegates are merchants. They're mostly politicians. I'd like to have you serve as the chairman of my administration committee for the constitutional convention." So I did...That seemed to kind of launch me into Never Never Land. The next thing you know, why I'm tagged as some kind of politician. That...wasn't what I went there to do, but that's the way it worked out.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), August 2010. Nenana, Alaska.

Coghill's use of the phrase "... That seemed to kind of launch me into Never Never Land..."¹¹¹ expounds on the tangible reality of a sense of purpose that the convention climate encouraged in 1955.

Coghill's recollections of much of his life's work in politics are strong. Very early in his political career, Coghill formed his goals for political office based on his belief system. Coghill says

Well, the goals for political offices was number one to get the traditions of the American life, become self-sufficient, to have your own political structure, and of course that's why I fought for statehood.¹¹²

Politics are often synonymous with service, an idea which had been instilled in Coghill from an early age by his father. Coghill started his journey through the political arena at the age of twenty-two, becoming a member of the school board. Coghill says

I was in the store...(and) one day they came in and they said, "Well, Joe McNavish, who was the head of the Alaska Railroad passed...away," and so they asked me: "would you like to sit on the school board until the next election?" Billy Monroe was the president of the school board. Mae Williams was the secretary...and I said, "Sure I'll do that." So that was in... 1947, and... twelve years later... I finally got off the school board seat. So that's how I got into the political arena really... And that's why I was a student of government. Why you kind of got used to that...(In) 1952... they said "Well, what you ought to do is run for the Territorial House." And I did. That was my first election... I served down in Juneau for sixty days with Territorial Legislature, and became the chairman of the educational committee, and did those kinds of things.¹¹³

4.8 Alaska Constitutional Convention

The "Alaska Constitutional Convention" is the super code or central theme of this entire project, and is also a code family in Coghill's chapter. Coghill spoke about the code family "Alaska Constitutional Convention" forty-four times throughout all four of Coghill's interviews.

¹¹¹ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhill), August 2010. Nenana, Alaska.

¹¹² Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhill), August 2010. Nenana, Alaska.

¹¹³ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhill), August 2010. Nenana, Alaska.

The connection between this event and Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett helped to establish this code family as the thesis super code for this project. The code family “Alaska Constitutional Convention” contains the codes “Alaska Constitutional Convention,” “Constitutional Convention,” “Convention,” and “committees.” Coghill, like many other Alaskans involved in politics, promoted statehood for the community of Alaska. In Coghill’s mind, each person is an individual part of the larger puzzle that fits together as a whole community. To Coghill

...the structure of the layouts of the communities, the structure of...making sure that there’s properties...set aside for...people to worship in their own respect; that there’s not just one basic religion, which is one of the things that our...founding fathers fought (for) all the time...There was a big determination that...there was only one religion, which is not true at all...It’s a respect of people to be able to do those things that they want to do themselves... You’ve gotta remember that in the early days of our country, people looked to the end of their wrist for their helping hand, and they didn’t look to government.¹¹⁴

Thus, the cause of statehood, for Coghill, and many others, was an equality with the rest of the American states that did not exist in the Territory of Alaska. In Coghill’s view, the statehood movement

...started...with the Department of Education and with representation...In the territorial days you’re...kind of a second class citizen. You didn’t have full control of what you’re doing. The Congress, and particularly the Senate Interior Committee kind of ruled the roost as to what was going to happen...in the territorial structure...and that sparked an awful lot of interest in myself and most of the guys who were in the Constitutional Convention We wanted to be full-fledged citizens... We wanted t be part of the family of...states. We wanted to have all of those things, and of course...we worked for that.¹¹⁵

Specifically, it was the individual efforts of the community of Alaskan statehood advocates that led them to create the Alaska Constitutional Convention.

¹¹⁴ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), August 2010. Nenana, Alaska.

¹¹⁵ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), August 2010. Nenana, Alaska.

When Coghill and the other delegates arrived at the convention in November of 1955, they came with a single purpose, to create a constitution for the future state of Alaska. The delegates came from many parts of Alaska. There were many different personalities among the delegates, and they each had their own way of doing things. This convention functioned better due to the President of the convention, Bill Egan, whom Coghill credits as being largely responsible for keeping the constitutional convention within the scheduled seventy-five days because of the structure Egan provided. Coghill says

...The apportionment structure that we had in the constitutional convention was; there were (a) certain amount of them elected at large; (a) certain amount of them were elected by judicial districts; (a) certain amount of us were elected...by...election districts. And that was so you had the coming of the minds of Alaskans from all different walks of life. And...that's...(what) you might say was the crowning glory of the constitution was, Bill Egan's from Valdez, not from a big city. He was from a small community.¹¹⁶

Moreover, according to Coghill, Egan was then elected by the other delegates at the convention, and upon his election, was able to focus on the job at hand and get work done. He immediately persuaded Coghill to be on the Ways and Means committee.

...the committee on committees made their selections. Bill Egan wanted me to be (on) the committee...(that) was like the ways and means committee...of the legislature... We have seventy-five days and so we had charts made. Charts were put on the wall. And we had certain times that...the committee on committees made the decision; this committee had to be reported in at a certain time.¹¹⁷

During the interviews, Coghill credits George Sundborg and Ernest Gruening for putting everything in proper perspective, but he credits Egan for keeping all the people at the convention in check.

¹¹⁶ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), February 2012. North Pole, Alaska.

¹¹⁷ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), February 2012. North Pole, Alaska.

Then George Sundborg, who...was the journalist who...had been...the head of the (Fairbanks Daily) News Miner...In Juneau...he was kind of a student of Ernie Gruening's, and he was the guy that kind of put everything in its proper place in proper perspective...I take my hat off to Bill Egan for keeping all of...the ambitious people in the territory...There's fifty-five of us, and that was an awful lot of personalities that were going one way...and...another...and they all have interests. And we put the constitution ahead of all those interests.¹¹⁸

Furthermore, according to Coghill, Egan was able to keep everybody together in a unified group, and he did this with a fair hand. However, this was not done by simply being fair. Egan took a firm hand in his role as president of the Alaska Constitutional Convention. Through his efforts, Egan was able to help establish a unity among the delegates of the convention. According to Coghill

This was not Bill Egan, the governor. This was Bill Egan...the Chairman of the constitutional convention. (Be)cause of his quiet, soft spoken, firm hand on the committee on committees...(where) he was...the chairman; he was the president of the constitutional convention...(He was) really, really a fine fair-minded guy...The thing is that he met with all the different committee people...and made sure that their schedules were going according to what the committee on committees had put together.¹¹⁹

In addition, there was a great deal of camaraderie at the convention, and in his recorded interviews, Coghill made it very clear that the delegates were at the convention to do a job, write a constitution, and they weren't going to let their differences get in the way of that mission. The cause of the convention was everything. Coghill expounds

¹¹⁸ Jack Coghill, Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), February 2012. North Pole, Alaska.

¹¹⁹ Jack Coghill, Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), February 2012. North Pole, Alaska.

...I think that the camaraderie of the convention...was basically we were all [Alaskans...and that seemed to be part of the success in the end. Nobody was (a) Democrat. Nobody was a Republican. Nobody was a Liberal. Nobody was a Conservative... We all studied the different articles of other states, and we had the Public Services Administration. Sometimes they tried to take over, but Bill...George, and us guys that...were chairmens of different committees; we met every day. Every day we met to...track...what the assignments were, and...how they were coming along. And we'd bring those committees in...and ask them...if they were lagging behind, but we did all right.¹²⁰

Moreover, the focus was intense, as was the desire of the delegates to finish within the seventy-five days. Everyone was held accountable for the time that was spent working on the Alaska Constitution. Time was an important factor at the convention, but they did not let it detract from the quality of work that they were responsible for. In his later life reflection in the second recorded interview, Coghill felt that he had the most influence on the Apportionment section of the Alaska Constitution. Coghill says

The...Apportionment...because in those days it was a reaction from the territorial days...when I ran for the Territorial House, and...I was not from Fairbanks. I was from Nenana, and so I had to spend most of my time going out into the...Bush...the villages, and of course I...had my own airplane. And...we would go, just hoppin' from one village to the next village...And of course...I had an advantage over most of them, because my Dad...was a trader and...he bought furs and...supplies, and sent supplies to different villages...and so the name Coghill...was known throughout the district.¹²¹

In addition, in Gordon Harrison's *Alaska Constitution a Citizen's Guide*, Harrison writes

A problem in all the states, but one exaggerated in Alaska because of its large size and scattered settlement, is how to provide adequate representation for sparsely settled, rural areas. At the constitutional convention in 1955-56, a legislative apportionment scheme was devised that based house seats on population and senate seats mainly on area. Thus, it was similar to the apportionment of Congress, where each state has two senators regardless of its size or population, and a number of representatives based on its population relative to the other states.¹²²

¹²⁰ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), February 2012. North Pole, Alaska.

¹²¹ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), February 2012. North Pole, Alaska.

¹²² Gordon S. Harrison. *Alaska's Constitution a Citizen's Guide*, 60.

At the convention, Coghill was also chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

Among other things this committee was responsible for paying wages for the delegates and staff of the convention. Coghill says

I was Chairman of the Ways and Means, or the committee that took care of the rent... We had \$385,000 dollars... pay the... wages... for the delegates per diem, rent... for the different secretaries we had.¹²³

Ultimately, Coghill took the responsibility of handling money seriously. He, after all, had been raised by a father who saw the value of a dollar, and emulated this himself. This made him a natural choice to be on the committee that handles money. Coghill writes

I was originally selected as the Vice-Chairman of the Administration Committee with Ralph Rivers as chairman, but he soon became the second Vice-President of the convention so they elected me chairman... We had the responsibility of administrating all of the money, and my chief job was to make sure that we had enough money to complete the job.¹²⁴

4.9 Alaska Constitution

Coghill uses the code family “Alaska Constitution” seven times during his two non-recorded interviews, and his two recorded interviews. The code family “Alaska Constitution” contains the codes “constitution,” and “state constitution.” Coghill connects the constitution with the specifics of the Alaska Constitution Convention, and this is how he explains his role as a delegate.¹²⁵ For example, it was more than money that drew Coghill and the other delegates and staff to the Alaska Constitutional Convention. The convention itself was important, and the delegates, and indeed the staff felt that they were a part of something bigger than themselves.

¹²³ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), February 2012. North Pole, Alaska.

¹²⁴ John B. “Jack” Coghill. *Growing Up Alaska*, 203.

¹²⁵ Jack Coghill, Interviews (by Leslie Drumhiller), 2009, 2010, & 2012. Fairbanks, Nenana, & North Pole, Alaska.

Coghill, and the others at the convention worked quickly over a period of seventy-five days.

They researched and crafted an original document, the Alaska Constitution. Coghill proclaims

Well, because it was put together by scratch; a bunch of Alaskans... We took excerpts from... certain states. We looked at... how they did things... We would get consultants, and we'd bring them in. It was done... (on) the Statehood Committee... (The articles)... were issued to the committee... that were working on... those articles... We had... a firm belief in... our work putting the thing together, that... if you had a proposal and you put it up, and it failed, it couldn't be brought back up again. And so it was... The idea behind that was that we only had seventy-five days to do that stuff in, so... we didn't have any stalling tactics. And everybody just kind of... agreed to do those things. And that's the way with the firm hand... of Bill... and the fine hand... of... George Sundborg.¹²⁶

Additionally, the event was part of a greater cause, statehood for Alaska. Many people would aid the delegates in their cause, including University of Alaska President Ernest Patty.

Coghill says

...Ernie Patty, who was... the President of the University of Alaska... just turned the whole university system over to us.¹²⁷

The University of Alaska would provide an academic structure that established a place that would support the creation of the Alaska Constitution.

4.10 Structure

Coghill uses the code family “structure” thirty times during his four interviews, thereby illustrating its importance. The code family “structure” contains the codes “territorial,” “family,” “Masonic,” “government,” “community,” “property,” “structure of the inner-soul,” “constitutional,” “apportionment,” “whole,” “middle,” “Christian,” and “throughout.” Coghill’s fascination with history appears in his written work and in the interviews for this project.

¹²⁶ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), February 2012. North Pole, Alaska.

¹²⁷ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), February 2012. North Pole, Alaska.

There were two early non-recorded interviews of Jack Coghill. The first interview took place over the phone in April 2009. The second took place later in the month at Gulliver's Books in Fairbanks, Alaska. These two interviews lacked the formality of the later recorded ones, and focused on Coghill's involvement in the Freemasons. The two formal recorded interviews used in this project took place in Nenana, Alaska, in August 2010, and North in Pole, Alaska in February 2012. The key points covered in these two interviews are Coghill's recollections of his early life, the beginnings of his early life, the beginnings of his involvement in politics, and his time as a delegate at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. Coghill's later life reflections portray with vivid clarity his commitment to Alaska and her people. The interviews further show that Jack Coghill is a deeply religious man who believes that Alaskans are Americans that feel a deep sense of pride in both their independence and in their place within the community. The interviews of Jack Coghill were also important to this project because his strong views represent one part of a very large political spectrum. Coghill is an extremely conservative Republican with deep family ties to Alaska.

Besides his conservative beliefs, Coghill also kept the Masonic tenants as part of his core beliefs. Coghill was raised into the Freemasons in 1962, six years after he served as a delegate to the Alaska Constitutional Convention. His reasons for becoming a Freemason had a great deal to do with his family. However, it was about more than just family connections. Coghill says

My father and great-grandfather were Masons. My grandfather was in Scottish Rite Lodge Number One in Scotland...First of all the lifestyle that we lead creates the drive to become a Mason. I followed in my father's and both my maternal and fraternal grandfather's footsteps. My wife's father was a Mason as well.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Jack Coghill, Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2009. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Freemasonry dictates that members reach out and support their community, stating that they, the individual members, are part of a larger community. For Coghill, these communities in turn, would become part of the new state of Alaska. Furthermore, the Masons were, and still are, people who believe in bettering themselves and their community. Coghill speaks briefly of one of the main reasons for the existence of the Freemasons in early Fairbanks;

(During the early part of the Twentieth Century in Fairbanks) before there were social services, there were organizations for people/miners who got hurt.¹²⁹

These ideas of community support would lay the groundwork and the foundation for Coghill's approach to government and service to others. Masonic community involvement and politics are tightly woven together for him. When asked about how he used Freemasonry in his daily life, Coghill says

...take a look at my life. Take a look at my involvement in being the mayor of Nenana or being on the constitutional convention, or being a member of the Alaska State Legislature, or the territorial legislature. It's a matter of doing your part in making sure that you believe in the structure of fairness and...of the power...of our maker.¹³⁰

Community attitudes in the 1950s were similar to Coghill's explanation of his definition of Freemasonry. Many Americans, and indeed, many Alaskans were extremely religious. By being kind to others and taking care of the whole community was part of the standard of living that many people held themselves to. The efforts of individuals for Alaskan statehood were difficult, however Alaskans wanted to both control their own destiny, and to be part of the elusive American Dream. This connected them with their American counterparts. Coghill proclaims

¹²⁹ Jack Coghill, Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2009. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹³⁰ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), August 2010. Nenana, Alaska.

It is a way of life. Treat others as well as you treat yourself. Look after widows. I followed in my father's and grandfather's steps (into the Freemasons) because it gave me a standard to look up to... It means everything to me which attaches your civil life to the morals to Christian life... Being a free man, not a servant. Being a free agent.¹³¹

This support and tight community ideal would be essential at the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and appealed to Coghill who was raised in the small town of Nenana. While he relied heavily on the influence of his father who first exposed him to Freemasonry, Coghill was brought into the Freemasons of the Tanana Lodge by Fairbanks resident Forbes Baker, Coghill says

...he knew my dad. And he knew my family, cause the Baker family goes way back, When I gave the identification that I wanted to join, he jumped right in. I believe he was secretary at the time. (Forbes Baker was) a forthright man. Dedicated to the principles of our life. The principles that are followed through our life connected to the fraternity.¹³²

4.11 Coghill's Reflections

The inter-woven tapestry of Jack Coghill's personal and professional life cannot easily be separated. The traditional patriarchal role played by the husband and father was highly prevalent during the 1950s. However, at the same time, some women chose to take a more active role in their communities and their homes, for World War II changed forever the idea that women should stay within the walls of the home. Out of necessity, during the war women worked outside of their homes in the factories and at other jobs that were often previously dominated by men. Coghill was raised in the traditional patriarchal home, and this idea has stayed with him throughout his life. Furthermore, in the style of the nineteenth century, Coghill treats women

¹³¹ Jack Coghill, Interview (by Leslie Drumhillier), Fall 2009. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹³² Jack Coghill, Interview (by Leslie Drumhillier), Fall 2009. Fairbanks, Alaska.

“like ladies” and holds the door for them. His manner is both courtly and respectful. This did not diminish his ability to work with women at the Alaska Constitutional Convention.

Furthermore, the University of Alaska, now the University of Alaska Fairbanks, established itself in Coghill’s mind as the place connected with the Alaska Constitution. Constitution Hall, where they wrote the constitution in 1955 and ’56, and Signer’s Hall, where they signed the constitution in 1956, still exist as a bookstore and as a variety of offices. The University of Alaska Fairbanks symbolizes the importance of place in Coghill’s memory, and he visits the campus as often as he can to talk with students and connect with his past.

Jack Coghill was born on September 24, 1925 in Fairbanks, Alaska, but spent much of his life in Nenana. Coghill writes

When we were growing up in that small town, Nenana was a mixed town, about forty percent white and sixty percent Athabascan Indian. But the Indians were nomadic and moved around according to the season.¹³³

In 2015, Nenana is still a small town “54.4 miles south of Fairbanks.”¹³⁴

In 2012, during his last interview for this project, Coghill revealed his faith as he reflected on the writing of the Alaska Constitution

It’s basically (a) good Christian structure(d) living. There was no question about (it), but the Constitutional Convention of the state of Alaska was a basic well thought out in depth Christian motivated structured (way) to build a civil government.¹³⁵

The standard of Christian living in the 1950s promoted a guide for how to live one’s life.

Now, in 2016, Jack Coghill is almost ninety-one, and the time he spent as a delegate at the Alaska Constitutional Convention is very much at the locus of his identity. He considers this

¹³³ John B. “Jack” Coghill. *Growing Up Alaska*, 24.

¹³⁴ Google. *Google Maps*, 2014.

¹³⁵ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), February 2012. North

to be his most important political contribution. According to Eric Morrison of the Juneau Empire in his article *Conventional Bean Counter*, Coghill says

...being elected as a delegate to the convention and helping create the Alaska Constitution remains the highlight of a political career that has spanned six decades.¹³⁶

John B. “Jack” Coghill was one of the youngest delegates at the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and, 60 years later, this personal story identifies Coghill’s attitude toward his family and his home. The six decades of service that he has engaged in were formulated as a child by his father and mother, especially his father. He has not veered far from this part of himself.

¹³⁶ Eric Morrison. “Conventional Bean Counter.” *Juneau Empire*.
Juneauempire.com/statehood/stories/jackcoghill.shtml

Chapter 5 Victor “Vic” Fischer

5.1 The Codes and Code Families of Vic Fischer

Family (cf) [17]

mother (c)
father (c)
adventurer/s (c)
traveling/ed (c)
values (c)
beliefs (c)

Work (cf) [36]

work/ed/ing (c)
job (c)
planner (c)
city planner (c)
state planner (c)
education (c)
educational (c)
books (c)
professor (c)
Political Science (c)

Politics (cf) [8]

political belief (c)
conservation (c)
Democratic (c)
Democrats (c)
Republican (c)

Alaska (cf) [63]

Alaska (c)
community/ies (c)
Arctic (c)
city (c)
Fairbanks (c)
Anchorage (c)
United States (c)
Congress (c)
issues (c)
statehood (c)

People (cf) [51]

people (c)
person (c)

Fairbanksans (c)
everybody/ies (c)

Alaska Constitutional Convention {Super Code} (cf) [19]

Alaska Constitutional Convention (c)
constitutional convention (c)
delegate/s (c)
Coghill (c)
Bill Egan (c)
unifier (c)
session (c)
Alaska Salmon Industry (c)

Alaska Constitution (cf) [64]

vote/d (c)
judiciary article (c)
judiciary branch (c)
judiciary rulings (c)
transcripts (c)
transcription (c)
state land (c)
state resources (c)
framework (c)
articles (c)
Bill of Rights (c)
Declaration of Rights (c)
Alaska State Senate (c)
state elections (c)
state judges (c)

Unity (cf) [82]

place (c)
agreement (c)
agree (c)
majority (c)
many (c)
unified (c)
phenomenal experience (c)
experience/s/ed (c)
feeling/s (c)
together (c)
compromise (c)
years, as in passage of time (c)
common purpose (c)
respectful (c)
camaraderie (c)

fellow man (c)

5.2 Introduction

There are a significant number of codes and themes in the twenty-one pages of the typed transcripts of Fischer's 2012 recorded interview. Some of these codes are grouped together in code families and one super code. The different codes that are grouped together either mean the same thing or they share a strong connection.

5.3 Family

The code family "family" contains the codes "mother," "father," "adventure/s," "travel/ing/ed," "values," and "beliefs." In his recorded interview, Fischer uses the code family "family" seventeen times. Victor "Vic" Fischer was, at 31, one of the youngest delegates at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. However, his journey from being a Jewish child of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, to being an American serving as a delegate at the convention was an unusual one. Fischer was born in 1924 in Berlin Germany. His mother was Russian, and his father was an American journalist. In his 2012 interview, Fischer says

I was born in Berlin, Germany of an American father and a Russian mother...My mother was working for the Soviet Railroad Commission established after their 1917 Revolution and Civil War, and my father was a journalist and writer...Through her he made contacts with people in Moscow, and became an American journalist in Russia.¹³⁷

Traveling between Germany and Russia as a boy established a love of travel in Fischer's mind. His parents traveled extensively and the desire explore new frontiers continued in their son, Vic. Fischer especially identified with his mother. In his 2012 book, *To Russia With Love*, Fischer writes, "I was my mother's son."¹³⁸ Like Coghill, Fischer had a strong relationship with his parents; however, where Coghill was extremely close to his father, Fischer's relationship with

¹³⁷ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹³⁸ Victor Fischer, *To Russia with Love* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2012), 11.

his father was complicated. Fischer writes “He preferred the posh life of a freewheeling international journalist to the role of a husband or dad.”¹³⁹ Fischer credits much of his humanity to his mother Markoosha.

From her I inherited my open affectionate spirit; my ability to change and adapt to new experiences; and my need for love, intimacy, and deep connection with my family and friends.¹⁴⁰

This connection to family played an important role in Fischer’s future life of service. By 1938, when Fischer came to the United States, these values were entrenched within him. This and a love of travel were echoed in his Fall 2012 interview when he says

...My father was constantly traveling. My mother was an adventurer, so between the two of them... It certainly was in my blood somewhere... I think they (my mother and father) influenced me mostly by the values, service to fellow man, caring about people, wanting to make a contribution.¹⁴¹

However, it would be incorrect to say that his father, Louis, was not involved in his childhood at all. When Fischer was fourteen, his father, with the help of Eleanor Roosevelt, brought the boys and Markoosha to the United States. Fischer writes

Mrs. Roosevelt sent Louis a handwritten note that said, “just back on the plane with Oumansky who told me he thought your little matter was arranged.”¹⁴²

With the help of his father, Louis, and his father’s connection with Eleanor Roosevelt, Fischer’s family left Russia behind for a new life in America. Fischer’s desire to explore the unfamiliar places in his travels began as a child in the Soviet Union. He read many books of faraway lands, including those about the United States; Consequently, Fischer became interested in the Arctic and Antarctica. Fischer says

¹³⁹ Victor Fischer, *To Russia with Love*, 86.

¹⁴⁰ Victor Fischer, *To Russia with Love*, 11.

¹⁴¹ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁴² Victor Fischer, *To Russia with Love*, 69.

...I spent some of my early formative years...living in the Soviet Union, and...as a kid became interested in exploration of the Arctic (and) Antarctic, but mainly...the north...I was enthralled with the idea when I grew up, doing something...opening up the lands of the Arctic.¹⁴³

5.4 Work

The code family “work” contains the codes “work,” “worked,” “working,” “job,” “planner,” “city planner,” “state planner,” “education,” “educational,” “books,” “professor,” and “Political Science.” In his recorded interview, Fischer uses the code family “work” thirty-six times. Fischer’s use of these codes illustrates many of the jobs that he has done, aside from his work as a delegate for the Alaska Constitutional Convention. This work would familiarize Fischer with much of Alaska. Fischer remembers

I was a...planner for all Alaska when I came. I spent a year and a half working with communities...from Ketchikan to Kotzebue. In between I was (an) Anchorage planning director. I spent four years in Washington D.C. at the high level in the federal government, dealing with metropolitan planning and development across the United States. I spent ten years as the director of the Institute of Social Economic and Government Research, which is now the Institute of Social Economic Research called ISER...(For) many years in Fairbanks, and now in Anchorage, I was a professor of Political Science. And...I was the director of the University of Alaska’s Office of Russian Affairs, dealing with issues between Alaska and Russia (which included) scientific ties on education...Oh, along the way I was a constitutional convention (delegate).¹⁴⁴

In many families, even when siblings are close, their interests and fields of study may be vastly different. While his brother, George, was interested in politics, Fischer was drawn toward books and gadgets. Learning was his passion. Fischer writes

George and I explicitly divided our bedroom into two sides, just as we separated our lives into our different interests and attitudes. On his side, politics and party were always most important. On my side, there were books and gadgets.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhillier), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁴⁴ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone interview (by Leslie Drumhillier), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁴⁵ Victor Fischer, *To Russia with Love*, 39.

From the time that he was young, education has always been an important component to of Fischer's identity. Throughout his life, he has never veered far from that focus on education, and his life choices reflect this. Fischer finished high school several years after arriving in the United States, and moved seamlessly onto his life's path. Fischer says

I came to the U.S., finished high school, started college, went to war in World War II, came back, had a Graduate degree in City Planning, and when I finished the first professional job in Alaska opened up, and I got it. And that's how I came in 1950; so the Arctic frontier was in my mind as a kid, and...I...decided Alaska was the place I'd want to be a city planner. And that's how I got here.¹⁴⁶

Once Fischer had arrived in Alaska, he committed himself to the improvement of his community.

5.5 Alaska

The code family "Alaska" contains the codes "Alaska," "community/ies," "Arctic," "city," "Fairbanks," "Anchorage," "United States," "Congress," "issues," and "statehood."

Fischer uses the code family "Alaska" sixty-three times during his 2012 recorded interview. The high use of these codes illustrates their importance to Fischer. Alaska was the place that Fischer had wanted to travel to as a young boy when he dreamed of going to the Arctic. When he arrived in 1950, he was outraged that he had lost his basic democratic rights, such as the right to vote.

This would lead Fischer to the Alaskan Statehood Movement. Fischer states

Alaska lived up to everything I expected it to be...(but)the one thing I had not consciously realized was that...I had lost my citizenship rights when I came to Alaska, because I could no longer vote for president...and senators. And that was...outrageous having been in World War II to protect Democracy...Now I was losing my basic democratic right to voting...So, with a lot of other veterans and non-veterans, I got involved in the statehood movement...which was the big issue in Alaska in the 1950s.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁴⁷ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

During the first half of the Twentieth Century, many Alaskans were frustrated with their separation from the basic citizenship rights of the United States. This idea was used by statehood organizers to fuel the Alaskan statehood movement. These people came together, and formed a community that was committed to a single cause.

5.6 People

These citizens were the people of Alaska, and they formed the communities that would come together from many parts of Alaska for the convention, and they were very much involved with statehood. The code family “people” contains the codes “people,” “person,” “Fairbanksans,” and “everybody/ies.” Fischer uses the code family “people” fifty-one times in his 2012 recorded interview, and illustrates the importance of the individual citizen to Fischer. The men and women were at the center of the statehood struggle. People came to the Alaska Constitutional Convention as individuals, but it was not long before they formed a unique sort of family. Fischer was one of those people involved in the statehood movement; and this would contribute to his becoming a delegate. Fischer says

...One thing led to another. A number of us...were in the citizen’s movement for statehood, (and) decided to participate in the constitutional convention...I was elected and that’s how I got into it. I was elected at large in South Central Alaska, everything from Aleutians and Bristol Bay to...Valdez, Cordova, and points in between, including Anchorage.¹⁴⁸

Fischer was one of a small group of people who were responsible for an area that was roughly more than 1,426.90 miles. Half of this area, the Aleutian Islands, was only accessible by air and water.

Fischer’s journey from Anchorage to the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Alaska Constitutional Convention to help write the Alaska Constitution, took place five years after he

¹⁴⁸ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

had arrived in Alaska in 1950 and eleven years after he arrived in the United States in 1939. He arrived at the convention as one individual among many. However, near the end of the convention, these individuals had grown closer. Fischer says

...In the beginning, people came from all parts of Alaska...including...Ketchikan and Kotzebue, and a lot of small towns and bigger cities in-between...Initially it was...very much (an) approach, in terms of doing something important for statehood...As the convention moved to the end, we got to know each other. You know, because many had never been beyond their own communities or gotten to know people from other parts of Alaska.¹⁴⁹

These people worked together to write the Alaska Constitution.

5.7 Alaska Constitutional Convention

The code family “Alaska Constitutional Convention” contains the codes “Alaska Constitutional Convention,” “Constitutional Convention,” “delegate/s,” “Coghill,” “Bill/Bill Egan,” “unifier,” “session,” and “Alaska Salmon Industry.” Fischer uses the code family “Alaska Constitutional Convention” nineteen times in his 2012 recorded interview. This code is the central point of the entire thesis. The interview of Fischer, along with the interviews of Coghill, Hurley, and Bartlett each contain the same clear connection to the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and represents itself as a super code, thereby connecting the “convention” to the other code families in a complicated inter-woven pattern of history.

Fischer and the other delegates arrived at the Alaska Constitutional Convention prepared to experience something new and different. Sixty years after the convention, Fischer recalls the events with a great deal of clarity when he says

¹⁴⁹ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

There were committees established...from the beginning...(and) by the end of the first week...(there were)...committees dealing with every aspect of the constitution...We had (had) consultants who had already drafted a tentative list of...what needs to be in a constitution.¹⁵⁰

Each delegate, along with other statehood advocates, conducted extensive research on conventions and constitutions. Fischer says

...It initially became a...process of getting settled in...and doing essential research in working to understand what our assignment really was; what it was to write a constitution in a modern age; learning from looking at the experiences of other states...(in) the United States. (We studied) the latest political science thinking, traditional thinking...experience in other areas, and just initially was a learning process.¹⁵¹

Fischer recalled the excitement and anticipation at the beginning of the convention. The convention that he and the other delegates were about to experience was new, and none of them had ever done this before. Fischer remembers

...when the delegates...arrived, the issue before us (was) we were going to help (the) state move along statehood...by writing this constitution...We were excited...I...was...excited in terms of, we were getting into something that none of us had never experienced, that was new, and the minds were very open.¹⁵²

Fischer's emotion brings up the details of this time with such clarity, fifty-seven years later, and the passage of time has done little to diminish his memories of this time. One memory that Fischer mentions is the election of Valdez resident Bill Egan as president of the convention. According to Fischer, Egan was a unifier. Fischer says

¹⁵⁰ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁵¹ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁵² Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

...(There) were issues of who's going to be the president of the constitutional convention, and there was a lot of back and forth on that...Bill Egan was elected president, and that...turned out to be...(an) important factor in the success of the convention, because Bill was a unifier. He was somebody who brought everybody along...(he) was a...very good presiding officer; level-headed, even-handed...Egan helped (them) be the very effective...working body of fifty-five delegates.¹⁵³

In his recollections, Fischer also talked about Tom Stewart, contributor to the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and indeed to the entire Alaskan Statehood Movement. Stewart worked with others around the United States in preparation for the convention. Fischer says

Tom Stewart...was elected secretary of the convention. He had...been involved in drafting the call for the convention (and) he had done preliminary research...He was a member of the legislature in '55. He had gone out...in 1954, and traveled...doing sort of background preparatory work for...drafting a call for a constitutional convention...He helped organize the convention together with a group called (the) Public Administration Service.¹⁵⁴

The Public Administrative Service published a three volume book set, which was made available to the delegates, and explained the workings of the convention. Stewart and other statewide organizers did extensive research into the best way to write a constitution. Because of this preliminary promotional research, when the delegates arrived at the convention they were presented with definitive research that helped them establish a clearly defined product, the Alaska Constitution. This clear guide to the structure of the convention helped to create the atmosphere of camaraderie among the delegates and staff. Fischer states

I would say the delegates all got along...(There) were people who were more active than others...There were some who...sort of spent more time by themselves, but all in all there was a good mixing of people...We served on different committees with different people.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁵⁴ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁵⁵ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Fischer recalls that they would work together, and the day's work often continued into the night. Delegates would gather and this led to many informal work sessions and discussions. Fischer says

...Each day we had a general session...all the delegates participated...and then we('d) go off and work in committees. So there was a lot of interaction. There was a lot of informality of work through lunches together, (and) when things started going into evening sessions, we had dinners together... We had committee meetings...at night, in the early mornings, (and) at night...in Fairbank.¹⁵⁶

The meeting took place on and off the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus and within the city of Fairbanks. Meetings were both scheduled and impromptu. Fischer remembers

...The convention was on the university campus outside of Fairbanks, and most people lived in the city... We would have meetings in somebody's hotel room or in lobbies of a hotel, or in apartments, or wherever we could. So there was a lot of interaction and people got to know each other. Everyone was respectful of everyone else, and got along... There was no dissension.¹⁵⁷

5.8 Alaska Constitution

The delegates arrived at the Alaska Constitutional Convention to write the Alaska Constitution. That was the sum total of what they had been sent there to do. The code family "Alaska Constitution" contains the codes "vote/d," "judiciary article," "judiciary branch," "judiciary rulings," "transcript/s," "transcription," "framework," "Bill of Rights," "Declaration of Rights," "Alaska State Senate," "state elections," "state judges," "state land," "state resources," and "articles." In his 2012 recorded interview, Fischer used the code family "Alaska Constitution" sixty-four times. The high usage of this code family shows its importance to Fischer. In his reflections on the specifics of the Alaska Constitution, Fischer talks about the responsibilities of Alaska's citizens to take part in her elections. Fischer declares

¹⁵⁶ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁵⁷ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

... We have a Declaration of Rights... (In) Section One... Article One... (it) uses the language from the Declaration of Independence... and throughout, from the U.S. Bill of Rights throughout Article One. But then there's a phrase added, that all persons... and I'm not quoting directly... all persons have... recitation of those rights. All persons have a corresponding obligation to the people and to the state, and... which people who don't participate in elections... should think about... Voting is a responsibility to the people and to the state.¹⁵⁸

The issue of voting, and the age that an individual is allowed to vote is an important one to Fischer. Throughout his recollections in this 2012 interview, he would allude to it. As stated earlier, Fischer was moved to action by his inability to vote in national elections once he came to Alaska in 1950. However, the Alaska Constitution created more articles and amendments than Article V, which deals with, among other things, voting age. Nevertheless, sixty years later, Fischer is still strongly encouraging citizens to exercise their responsibility to vote in Alaska's elections.

Fischer also praises the judiciary section of the Alaska Constitution, when he says

... The article on the judiciary... is very important, because we've had a phenomenally good court system. We've had good judges, fabulous justices in our supreme court; high quality responsible... It's a system that has worked extremely well.¹⁵⁹

One of the larger issues at the convention was whether judges should be elected or selected by merit. Fischer says

There were really big issues on the... judiciary article... Shall we elect our judges... or should judges under the state be selected on the basis of merit, rather than through a political... election... (There was a) big debate on that, but... the convention overwhelmingly approved the merit system that we now have in Alaska, which is probably the best one we have in the whole United States.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁵⁹ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁶⁰ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

In his 1975 book, *Alaska Constitutional Convention*, Fischer goes into more detail on the judiciary committee at the convention. Fischer writes

The proposal dealing with the judiciary branch was the first to be considered at the convention. It emanated from a committee that was in accord over the future state's judicial system. Consisting of five lawyers and two laymen, the committee quickly agreed to follow principles suggested by the American Bar Association and other professional civic groups.¹⁶¹

This committee worked together with a great deal of unity and a clear sense of purpose in what Article IV, dealing with the judiciary, would say. Fischer writes

The main features of the proposed system were unity, simplicity, efficiency, accessibility, independence from the executive and legislative branches, and accountability to the people.¹⁶²

Accountability was the primary motivation for Article VIII, Natural Resources. Almost since 1867 when the United States purchased Alaska from Russia, outside interests took Alaskan resources and their profits for their own benefit. During the 1950s, this taking of resources centered on the salmon industry and the fish trap. At the convention, discussion of resources would also involve discussion of oil development. According to Fischer, Alaskans should benefit from their resources. Fischer says

¹⁶¹ Victor Fischer, *Alaska Constitutional Convention* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1975), 113.

¹⁶² Victor Fischer, *Alaska Constitutional Convention*, 113.

...No one state had this comprehensive resource article, and that's because we have more...state land and state resources than any other state in the union. And so none of the others had to think about...overall management of an area larger than the whole state of California...that is the state of ownership. The...directive for...development...whatever...resources for maximum benefit of the people...Other requirements in that article on natural resources...provided the foundation for the kind of...benefits that have recued to (received by) the people of Alaska through...land selection and management of...the oil and gas resources of the state...In many ways...that is very significant, because the requirements for public notice for disclosure...competitive processes and so on. These are very important in making sure that...we don't have...deep corruption and...mismanagement of our resources.¹⁶³

In preparation for the different articles, there were many debates over many issues at the convention. Some of these issues were resolved quickly, and others dragged on for days and weeks. Fischer remembers

Some things...came up, were voted on and resolved; sometimes by a single vote margin...Other...issues dragged on for days and weeks, and...were never resolved to everyone's agreement...There were people that...know the constitution by articles according to subject matter, (the) number from each article in sections. And each one was voted on...(In) each article there was one final vote...There were...some articles (that) were approved unanimously. But most (articles) had people voting no. So there was never total agreement on anything.¹⁶⁴

5.9 Unity

However, as Fischer states, the delegates and staff all had close connection to place and to each other at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. The code family “unity” contains the codes “place,” “agreement,” “agree,” “majority,” “many,” “unified,” “phenomenal experience,” “experience/s/ed,” “feeling/s,” “together,” “compromise,” “years, as in passage of time,” “common purpose,” “respectful,” “camaraderie,” and “fellow man.” Fischer uses the code family “unity” sixty-four times in his twenty-one pages of transcript. The high usage of this code shows that these words are important to Fischer, who recalls with fondness his comrades of days gone

¹⁶³ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁶⁴ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

by. For Fischer, the delegates and staff had become comrades in arms. As a former veteran, Fischer compared the experience of the convention to a battle. About sixty years later, Fischer remembers with excitement

...I wrote...in the last part of the book...as to how...the constitutional convention came to a close, and in the context of that, talked about the camaraderie and fellowship (that) characterized...It was just as somebody described it...I don't quite remember who said it, but it was like...soldiers who have gone through battle together, who have...gone through tough times, experienced everything...(and) sort of came out as brothers.¹⁶⁵

Nevertheless, there was a unity between the delegates of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, which helped them to accomplish the task of writing a constitution. This did not mean that the delegates did not argue. During the interview, Fischer was clear about the difference between dissension and argument. While it was true there was no dissension (strong disagreement; a contention or quarrel; discord); there was argument (a discussion involving different points of view; debate). Fischer says

...There were endless arguments (among the delegates)...It was about big issues and little issues. Things like, what would be the voting age for people to vote in state elections...(In)...the Alaska Territory...the age was twenty-one...On the floor it was proposed...to make it...twenty...I offered an amendment that it be...eighteen, because...people were being drafted into the army in those days, and into the armed forces...The point was if you can serve...in the military...you should be able to vote...And it was voted down...It was proposed to make it (twenty-one), and twenty-one was turned down...The compromise was nineteen...Of course subsequently...the U.S. Constitution...now provides eighteen...An act of Congress...(states that) eighteen is the law of the land.¹⁶⁶

In spite of the debates centered on the different articles, there was a great deal of positive emotion involved in the writing of the Alaska Constitution. By the end of the convention, the

¹⁶⁵ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁶⁶ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

delegates and staff worked as a unified group. This unity is talked about by all of the interviewees in this thesis. Fischer says

...At the end...it was very much...a unified group that worked together...very affectively, worked very very hard. There was a real...heavy duty operation toward the end getting all the articles approved...getting the whole constitution put together.¹⁶⁷

Unity is a key element of the inner workings of the Alaska Constitutional Convention. There was according to Fischer, a strong common purpose that helped to make the convention successful in achieving the goal that had been promoted by Alaskan statehood advocates. This was done with common purpose, and arose from the delegates being willing to learn from each other. Fischer says

...There was a very strong common purpose. It was a phenomenal educational process of work. Educational you might say...(with)...a small e, because we each...learned about subject matter that we were totally unfamiliar with. We became, if not experts, we became knowledgeable...We learned to respect each other and other people's judgement, and knowing their goal was our goal...Some people came in with specific objectives, of wanting something in the constitution, or not wanting something in the constitution...But we learned that no one can have...his or her way all the time. We learned to work with other people...(to compromise)...It was just a matter of...common purpose and respect for each other.¹⁶⁸

The battle-worn veteran and his brother in battle share an experience that cannot be understood by the outsider or by one who did not experience the battle.¹⁶⁹ Many facets make up this experience for Fischer and the other delegates and staff: the place, the task at hand, and even the weather. The place was the Alaska Constitutional Convention at what is now Constitution Hall at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The task was to do something that had never been

¹⁶⁷ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁶⁸ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁶⁹ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview, (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

done in Alaska: write a constitution for the future state. The weather was almost fifty degrees below, and this kept people inside and kept the focus on the task at hand. This common purpose was established by fifty-five different men and women. Fischer says

I think each person brought his and her...social background to the...debates and discussions...The overriding thing was we had one common purpose, and that was to write the best possible constitution for the future of Alaska, for the people of Alaska...That was...just a common goal, and of course a concurrent goal. But the immediate goal also was to do a great job so that we would contribute...to getting statehood for Alaska, to making Alaska a state.¹⁷⁰

5.10 Fischer's Reflections

Fischer remembers that when he came to Alaska in 1950, it was because he felt the pull of the West, based on what he had learned when he was younger.¹⁷¹ Fischer says

I came to Alaska in 1950, because it was far west and go as far north as I could go, and (still) be in the United States.¹⁷²

Fischer would pass on a love of learning and exploration years later when he was a professor in Fairbanks and Anchorage, Alaska. Before he was a professor, Fischer earned his B.A. in 1945 at the University of Wisconsin, his M.C.P. in 1950 at MIT, and M.P.A. in 1962 at Harvard University. In 2006, the University of Alaska Anchorage awarded Fischer an honorary Doctorate of Laws. Fischer then earned Emeritus status. During his one recorded interview, Fischer spoke as a professor, with a story to tell.

This formal recorded interview with Vic Fischer took place over the phone at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Fischer was at his home in Anchorage during the phone interview. The key point of this interview was Fischer's involvement as a delegate for the Alaska

¹⁷⁰ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview, (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁷¹ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview, (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁷² Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview, (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Constitutional Convention; however, he also mentioned some of his early life. Fischer's later life reflections portray a scholar and an intellect who believes that the story of Alaska's beginnings must continually be retold and shared with future generations. This personal devotion to his story continues to create a living history. Fischer is also committed to the people of Alaska, and from his earliest days here, he has identified himself as an Alaskan, and an American. The interview with Vic Fischer was important to this project because his passionate views are strong and represent one aspect of the many different delegates at the convention. Fischer is an extreme liberal with deep ties to his family and the people of Alaska.

However, for Fischer, remembering is not enough. He relives the experience each time he tells his story. Fischer often tells the story of his experience and the importance of the constitution to students in the twenty-first century. He talks about the constitution, the convention, and community involvement, and he encourages high school students to become involved by voting. Fischer says

...It's important to talk about it...I speak quite a bit in high schools, and I tell young people they should know about the constitution...It's important to good citizenship. It's...important to understand...what Alaska's about. It's important to vote, to participate in the state, your community, and your neighborhood...I think the constitution is important; something about it for me, it's important.¹⁷³

The importance of community involvement by Alaska's citizens is interwoven throughout the Alaska Constitution. Fischer, discussing the importance of this constitution sixty years later, and its significance in the Twenty-First Century, states

¹⁷³ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

I would say... (the Alaska Constitution is)... not as important as it was then (in 1955). It's a hell of a lot more important! Then, it was an academic document for a future state. Today it is a document that exists... in (the) reality of setting rules for the functioning of the state of Alaska (and) three branches of government. It's the basis for... judiciary rulings, for management of the resources, none of which was true in 'fifty-five/'fifty-six.¹⁷⁴

Fischer explains that this living and fluid, tangible document was written consciously for Alaska and her people. This, according to Fischer, makes the Alaska Constitution a living document. Fischer explains

...The constitution was written consciously... to provide a foundation and a framework for the state. It was not written to be... literally... interpreted. It was not written to be a strait jacket for the future state. It was meant to be a living document that... would allow flexibility through adaptations for changing conditions, and... as such it can continue to live and function.¹⁷⁵

In 2016, Fischer will be 92, and the time that he spent as a delegate is a central component of his identity. Fischer's word choices during his 2012 recorded phone interview reveal a man whose words are carefully selected, forming an interwoven tapestry of the Alaska Constitutional Convention. Fischer uses the art of storytelling and his understanding of his role in history to pass on the concept of a living document to a new generation of Alaskans. Fischer accepted his responsibility as a delegate because he believed that the constitution would be good for the Alaska people, and he wanted a part in that history. Every time he shares his story, he achieves this goal.

¹⁷⁴ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhillier), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁷⁵ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhillier), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Chapter 6 Katherine “Katie” Hurley

6.1 The Codes and Code Families of Katie Hurley

Family (cf) [47]

mother (c)
father (c)
dad (c)
stepfather (c)
family (c)
obedient daughter (c)
daughter (c)

Work (cf) [53]

work (c)
job (c)
employment service (c)
Secretary of the Senate (c)
Clerk Stenographer (c)
Chief of Staff (c)
secretary (c)
teacher (c)
education (c)
advice (c)

People (cf) [114]

Alaskans (c)
Ernest Gruening (c)
Bob Bartlett (c)
person (c)
people (c)
everyone (c)

Politics (cf) [20]

Republicans (c)
Democrats (c)
Committee for Democrats (c)
partisan politics (c)
politics (c)
politically (c)
session (c)

Statehood (cf) [45]

bill (c)
vote (c)
voter (c)

issue (c)
Alaska Statehood Committee (c)
Operation Statehood (c)
statehood (c)
statehood bill (c)
United States (c)

Alaska Constitutional Convention {super code} (cf) [100]

Alaska Constitutional Convention (c)
constitutional convention (c)
convention (c)
bill (c)
staff (c)
delegate (c)
Bill Egan (c)
Vic Fischer (c)
Jack Coghill (c)
D.A. Bartlett (c)
university(c)
Chief Clerk (c)
Mildred Herman (c)
Public Administration Service (c)
everybody (c)

6.2 Introduction

Six of the Alaska Constitutional Convention delegates were women. However, many of the convention staff positions were held by women. One of these was convention Chief Clerk Katie Hurley from Juneau, Alaska. There are many codes and themes that are used in the thirty-eight pages of typed transcripts of Hurley's two recorded interviews. These codes are grouped together in a variety of code families and one super code, the "Alaska Constitutional Convention," connects all four of the interviews in this thesis. The different codes and code families are grouped together, and each one shares a strong connection with the others. The code families that are used in this chapter are "family," "work," "people," "politics," "statehood," and "Alaska Constitutional Convention."

6.3 Family

Like Coghill and Fischer, Hurley talks about her family and her earliest influences. During her two recorded interviews, Hurley uses the code family "family" forty-seven times. The code family "family" contains the codes "mother," "father," "dad," "stepfather," "family," "obedient daughter," and "daughter." The connections and obligations to her family have stayed with Hurley for her entire life. As a young woman, her dreams of getting an education were dictated by her mother. Hurley followed her mother's direction unwillingly. Hurley says

My mother was very big on education, but when it came time for me to go to college...My older sister was putting her husband through medical school, and my mother decided that if I lived with them in Portland, Oregon and went to Business College, that it would help them. It was not gift to me. It was horrible.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

During Interview One, Hurley referred to herself as an “obedient daughter,”¹⁷⁷ so she would nonetheless follow her mother’s direction. This commitment to her mother would remain with Hurley for all of her adult life. After one year in Oregon, Hurley finally established herself by making friends. Then her mother summoned her home. Hurley remembers

After one year...I had made a lot of friends in Portland and I was all ready to stay...I had an offer of a job, and my mother said no, I couldn’t stay. I had to come home, and I, being the obedient daughter, came home.¹⁷⁸

Katie Hurley was born in Juneau on March 30, 1921, to Norwegian immigrants. In her first fall 2012 interview, Hurley says

I was born in Juneau. My parents were Norwegian immigrants who met in Juneau, Alaska...My mother knew a good thing and she never told me this until I was quite grown, but she knew my father only six weeks, and they were married.¹⁷⁹

Hurley’s parents shared many passions, which they passed on to their children: music, politics, and baseball. Hurley remembers her mother as being extremely musical, and there was always music in the house. Hurley says

...My mother had a very lovely voice and she was always singing around the house, (and) she (felt that)...it was very important (that) we have music...One of the first things they invested in was a piano and we all took piano lessons.¹⁸⁰

While music was extremely important to Hurley, her interest in politics began with her father.

Hurley says

...My father was very...outgoing, and he was interested in politics...(Both of my parents were Democrats, and that I’m sure (is) how I became a Democrat in the first place.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁷⁸ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁷⁹ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁸⁰ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁸¹ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

In recalling the memories of her early life, Hurley mentioned her father's outgoing nature more than once, while early memories of her mother's center on her mother's music. During the first fall 2012 interview, Hurley connected her mother and father's activities together, and they emerge in the retelling, interwoven together. Hurley remembers

It...was my mother...(who) really instilled the music part...My father was very outgoing and...had loads of friends, and was really...politically astute. He loved baseball too...(and) he always took me to baseball games, so I had an interest in sports.¹⁸²

Around 1927, when Hurley was seven years old, she recalls that her parents procured a car. Some of Hurley's happiest memories were driving to picnics with her parents. She also remembers being taught to drive by her father. Hurley says

We didn't get a car until...I must have been about...six or seven years old...We went camping every summer...pick(ed) berries and made jelly...(We also went to the) beach, and we had a great (time)...And I learned to drive from him.¹⁸³

Hurley had an idyllic childhood until the age of fourteen, when her father died. Hurley recalls

I had a great childhood until my father died...He was only forty-six years old, (and he died) from cancer. I was only fourteen, and so I missed (him) a lot...He was the person who took me to the post, to the library for the first time when I was five years old. I had a lot of good memories.¹⁸⁴

Reading created in Hurley, a connection of learning to read and memories of her father.

Hurley's discovery of reading set in motion a lifelong love of learning that contributed to her work with Ernest Gruening and the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and would stay with her all of her life. There are two formal recorded interviews with Katie Hurley, took place over the phone at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Hurley was in her home in Wasilla during the

¹⁸² Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁸³ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁸⁴ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

phone interviews. The key points of these interviews are her work with Ernest Gruening, and her involvement in the Alaska Constitutional Convention.

6.4 Work

Work was incredibly difficult to obtain in Hurley's day, but she persevered. Work has remained important to her since Hurley was very young. She used the code family "work" fifty-three times in her two recorded phone interviews. The codes that are contained within the code family "work" are "work," "job," "employment service," "Secretary of the Senate," "clerk stenographer," "Chief of Staff," "secretary," "teacher," "education," and "advice." Hurley's work throughout her life was a result of perseverance and a great deal of patience. Hurley went to the employment service almost as soon as she returned from her year in Oregon. Hurley remembers

I went to the employment service...and jobs were not easy to get back then...The manager of (the) office was very...supportive of me, and he would send me out on all these opportunities. But they were mostly government jobs where they only had so much money, and when they ran out of money...I was the first to go...That went on for two or three months, and then one day I got called...to the Governor's office...to take a test for a clerk stenographer job...I went, and when I walked in there were two other young women...I knew...one of them...from high school...(She) was a cracker jack...secretary type, and she won all of the contests...I thought...I'll never make this, and I just went in and relaxed.¹⁸⁵

Ernest Gruening administered the test for Hurley's first permanent job with the territorial government. Hurley says

¹⁸⁵ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

The test taking dictation from the Governor of Alaska, who had been governor for... (the)... year I was... out of the territory. And now, going back, had an eastern accent and a vocabulary. That was Ernest Gruening... My test... was to take this letter and transcribe it... The letter was to the Governor of Puerto Rico with all those Hispanic names... I thought (it was a) good thing I took those two years of Spanish in high school, and... I wasn't thrown by all those Hispanic names... So I went home, not thinking... there wasn't a chance in Hades that I was going to get this job... I got a call that (I was to) report to work on... the next Monday. This... (was)... on a Friday, and... (that)... was... (the) beginning of my long career working for Governor Gruening.¹⁸⁶

Emotional recall is extremely strong with Hurley's retelling of her early work experience. In the interview she considers, the educational experience that she gained in her twelve years working for Gruening. Hurley recalls

He (Gruening) was so wonderful to me... His secretary at the time, told me that any time I didn't understand... that I should ask. (I should) not... try to guess what he was saying... That was very good advice, and... he would not only answer my questions... he'd give me a history lesson almost... every day... It was wonderful... time of life.¹⁸⁷

Hurley not only worked closely with Gruening, but he became a surrogate father to her.

Hurley said

He (Gruening)... always... treated me like... the daughter he never had, (be)cause he had three sons.¹⁸⁸

The close connection that was established resulted in Gruening offering Hurley's mother the Governor's mansion for Hurley's first wedding reception. However, even when Hurley was first married, she had to work because there was very little money. Hurley remembers

When I got married... they offered my mother... the Governor's mansion for the reception... Then when I was married... my husband (was) still in the service... I needed to work... and so I kept working.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁸⁷ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁸⁸ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁸⁹ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Hurley's desire to continue working lasted until she was pregnant for the first time with her son, David. Hurley recalls that, when she told Gruening that she was pregnant, he teased her. Defying the conventions of the mid-1950s, Hurley continued to work until the weekend David was born. Hurley reminisces

Then I got pregnant which was not planned...the governor said to me the day that I went to tell him..."Oh, was it immaculate conception?" That's...what a great relationship we had...Of course I blushed all over, and then he apologized. (I said) you don't need to apologize...And so I worked, which was unheard of in those days; in...an important and public job as the governor's office was. I worked up until...the weekend that David was born, and nobody had ever done that...Women didn't work when they were...obviously pregnant, but he (Gruening) let me work.¹⁹⁰

When David was born, Hurley was unsure when she would return to work, but Gruening came to visit Hurley to find out if she wanted to go back to work. Hurley says

...The governor was in Washington, D.C., but when David was born...he came back to see me and wanted to know when...I could come back to work...I...really wasn't sure I wanted to go back to work. I was really enamored at having this baby...Yet my husband was just getting started in his business, so I knew I had to. But my mother hadn't even discussed it, and she was there when the governor asked me that question...(She said) "Oh she can go back to work tomorrow. I'll take care of the baby." So that was that.¹⁹¹

According to Hurley, her relationship with Gruening was not the standard employee employer one. He was both a father figure, a teacher, and a mentor to her. They would remain friends for the rest of Gruening's life. His influence has lasted throughout Hurley's entire professional life. Hurley says

He was (a)...wonderful teacher, and it helped me a lot. We never had any kind of disagreement...I never saw the temper...He was very opinionated, I know that.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁹¹ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁹² Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

6.5 People

During her time working with Gruening, Hurley connected with many prominent people, and Hurley uses the code family “people” one-hundred fourteen times. The code family “people” contains the codes “Alaskans,” “Ernest Gruening,” “Bob Bartlett,” “person,” “people,” and “everyone.” The high usage of this code family illustrates the importance of people to Hurley, and the connection of the Alaskan people to the statehood movement, one of them was Bob Bartlett.

Due to his popularity with certain federal agencies, Bartlett was able to accomplish a lot for the Alaskan people. Hurley says

He worked real well...with the Army to get...more troops...(to)...Alaska...He was very well respected by...federal agencies...and so he was able to get appropriations...(aid) to dependent children...programs (from the)...federal government before statehood...He...lean(ed) on the feds for appropriations for the territory...There was very little taxation that would go into the treasury, but the feds...appropriations...kept us going...(Bartlett) worked well with...other senators...(for) support...with (the) statehood bill.¹⁹³

Bartlett was one, of many individuals who worked for statehood.

6.6 Politics

Hurley remembers not only the individuals involved in the Alaskan Statehood Movement, but the politics as well, for politics have been important to Hurley for much of her adult life. During her two recorded interviews, Hurley used the code family “politics” twenty times. The code family “politics” contains the codes “Republicans,” “Democrats,” “Committee for Democrats,” “partisan politics,” “politics,” “politically,” and “session.” While the Alaska Constitutional Convention was non-partisan, territorial politics were very much about the party

¹⁹³ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

that was in charge. While the count in this code family is lower than some others, its importance is its connection to other code families is clear.

6.7 Statehood

The Alaskan Statehood Movement had attracted many different people. Young and old alike were drawn to the Alaskan frontier and the promises that statehood represented. Hurley used the code family “statehood” forty-five times during her two recorded interviews. The code family “statehood” contains the codes “bill,” “vote,” “voter,” “issue,” “Alaska Statehood Committee,” “Operation Statehood,” “statehood,” “statehood bill,” “United States,” and “non-voting delegate.”

Alaskan statehood advocates had intensified their efforts with the formation of the Alaskan Statehood Committee in 1949. Gruening recruited one-hundred prominent Americans to be advocates for statehood. In his article “A Brief History of Alaska Statehood 1867-1959” Eric Gislason writes

The Alaska Statehood Committee was formed in 1949 to intensify efforts toward statehood, calling on national and labor organizations, newspaper editors, and state governors to support and publicize Alaska’s situation. Gruening himself compiled a committee of one-hundred prominent Americans who supported Alaska’s aspirations, including Eleanor Roosevelt, actor James Cagney, Pearl S. Buck, John Gunther, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.¹⁹⁴

Not only were national figures part of the statehood movement that would lead to the Alaska Constitutional Convention, but there were many Alaskan figures as well. One of the most notable was Alaska lawyer Mildred Herman, one of the six women who were convention delegates. Hurley says

¹⁹⁴ Eric Gislason, *A Brief History of Alaska Statehood 1867-1959*. Date unknown. Xroads.virginia.edu/-cap/Bartlett/49state.html

Mildred Herman was...one of the first women lawyers in Alaska, (and) she was in Juneau and practiced law. She was the secretary of that group, and she was a Republican... There were several people on the statehood committee... (who were)... Democrats, but... partisan politics did not enter into (it)... (The Statehood Movement) was getting us to be a state, (and) that was the issue.¹⁹⁵

Early Alaskan statehood advocates, such as Gruening, promoted their cause by writing about the colonial attitudes of the United States government toward the Territory of Alaska. One example of colonial attitudes is the lack of self-government for people living in the territory. Hurley recalled that Gruening would encourage people to ask questions of the federal government officials about decisions that were being made for Alaskans¹⁹⁶ According to Hurley, Gruening felt that the average Alaskan was not consulted in the decisions being made that directly affected them.¹⁹⁷ Hurley states

The one thing that... (Gruening)... did is that he made people feel that they should question... some of the decisions that were... being made for Alaska without including Alaskans; (such as) the Interior Department... (They were)... making... decision(s) that (were)... going to affect Alaska... not checking... whether Alaskans wanted that or not... He go the legislature passing... ordinances that would question the decision that some of the agencies were making for Alaska.¹⁹⁸

According to Hurley, two of the strongest advocates for statehood were Gruening and Bartlett. Hurley says

¹⁹⁵ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁹⁶ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One & Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁹⁷ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One & Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

¹⁹⁸ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

(Bartlett) was a real leader, because he knew how to get things done; and (to) make people feel like they were... a part (of the work he was involved in)... even though in many cases they didn't do anything but make a phone (call) for him... But, he was very popular... because he wasn't outwardly aggressive... He was aggressive in (the) way he took office constantly. He was a complete opposite, as a personality, from Gruening... Gruening had so much education... His father had been a very... fine surgeon, and had a practice... in New York City... Gruening was the only son... He had two or three sisters, and the father wanted him to be a doctor. So, he went to medical school, and... did everything, but he never practiced medicine because he got into politics and liked that way more.¹⁹⁹

Though outwardly opposites, Gruening was highly educated and aggressive, while Bartlett was not as outwardly aggressive, the two men worked toward the same purpose. Hurley continues.

Bob was... very popular with everyone... and he was very popular... with congressman too. As a result... he was able to do a lot of things (for Alaskans. Bartlett brought) money to... programs... (in)... Alaska... that were needed... He... was appointed... right after (World War II).²⁰⁰

Gruening and Bartlett were not just two of the many people who supported Alaskan statehood, however, they were two of the most outspoken.

During her first interview, Hurley reflected on her final days working for Ernest Gruening, and the politics that were the reason for her change in jobs. Hurley says

I was with him until... (the) election in 1944 when... Eisenhower was elected, and (the) Democrats were out... (The) governor of Alaska, at that time, was appointed by the President, and it went by the party who was in charge. And so I was out of (a) job... I had gone from clerk stenographer to Chief of Staff, and was in charge of the office for the last five years. Then, when... the... party changed... I... was out of a job... The legislature... met every two years... (and) I got (a) job as secretary of the senate in 1955.²⁰¹

However, Alaskan statehood would be achieved much sooner than many people thought. The Alaskan statehood movement involved people from all over the United States, and Hurley credits

¹⁹⁹ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁰⁰ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁰¹ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Bob Bartlett as a main component of this involvement with his support of statehood. Bartlett worked directly with people, and created a grassroots movement among the Alaskan and American people. Hurley remembers

Bob was there, and it was several years until we became a state... We became a state a lot sooner than people thought we would... I think it was because (of) Bartlett's connections... He was very popular with... congressman... It was the statehood committee here in Alaska too, that was working with... getting Alaskans to write to their relatives and friends in other parts of the country... (for)... support; to get their congressmen to support statehood for Alaska.²⁰²

Long time Alaskans were not the only supporters of the statehood movement. Young soldiers were attracted to Alaska and the opportunities the territory had to offer. Hurley says

That was a big movement...(and it) was amazing how... we became a state so fast. I think... they felt that a part of it was because during the war there were a lot of young people... that got stationed in Alaska, and fell in love with Alaska... A lot of them became very supportive of statehood (and)... that started when I was still in the governor's office. (It was) really a big movement... and nobody dreamed that we would be admitted as soon as we were.²⁰³

6.8 Alaska Conventional Convention

The Alaska Constitutional Convention was the culmination of the many years of preparatory work done by Alaskan statehood advocates. From the early days of 1916, when Judge James Wickersham introduced the first Alaskan statehood bill, until November 8, 1955 when the convention started, the goal was always statehood. Hurley used the code family “Alaska Constitutional Convention” one hundred times during her two recorded phone interviews. As stated in earlier chapters, the code family “Alaska Constitutional Convention” is the super code of this thesis, and in Hurley's interview, contains the codes “Alaska Constitutional Convention,” “constitutional convention,” “convention,” “bill,” “staff,”

²⁰² Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁰³ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

“delegate,” “Bill Egan,” “Vic Fischer,” “Jack Coghill,” “D.A. Bartlett,” “university,” “chief clerk,” “Mildred Herman,” “Public Administration Service,” and “everybody.” For Hurley, the people at the Alaska Constitutional Convention were the key elements for the convention’s success.

Alaska statehood organizers had this in mind before the delegates met at the Alaska Constitutional Convention in November 1955. These same organizers would contract with the Public Administration Service to write background material that would be provided to the delegates before their arrival at the convention. Hurley says

On behalf of the Alaska Statehood Committee for the Alaska Constitutional Convention... these... three... yellow... volumes... were done by the Public Administrative Service... (The Statehood Committee) contracted with them, and... (these volumes) had all kinds of background for all of the delegates to have before the convention. (This was) so that... there was an agenda that they knew what their job was, what they needed to do, and naming they type of committees that... (were) needed.²⁰⁴

This preparatory work not only focused the delegates on the task at hand, but it gave them time to think about what they were doing, adding to the enthusiasm that would unite them in their cause.

Like Coghill and Fischer, Hurley paid tribute to the leadership of Bill Egan as convention president. Early on at the convention, camaraderie developed among the delegates who were so focused at the task on hand. Hurley says

There was this feeling in... most of the delegates that it was something that they were going to be contributing (to)... There was a lot of respect... for... each other, and there was such a difference in ages too... But... the camaraderie was (there). I also believe it was the leadership of... Bill Egan to be... the president... to be the person in charge of running the meeting made a lot of difference.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Katie Hurley, Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhillier), fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁰⁵ Katie Hurley, Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhillier), fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Hurley attributes Egan's success at the convention to his ability work with not only the experienced delegates but with the novice ones as well. Egan gave a great deal of respect to all of the delegates. As Chief Clerk, Hurley sat at the front of the room and was able to observe Egan closely. Hurley remembers

I'm certain that...there were some of the delegates had never been in a legislative body... (Someone would be) ill at ease, and (Egan) would motion to the person to come up to the podium where he was... The reason that I...notice(d) it all, was because I was the person who was closest to (Egan)... The president would be on a raised... (platform)... He would (sit) higher up than the rest of the delegates (who) were on the floor... I sat right in front of him on the lower... floor... I heard everything that... he said to people, unless they were whispering.²⁰⁶

During her second interview, Hurley used her emotion to recall the events of the early days of the Alaska Constitutional Convention and convention president Bill Egan. She notes that Egan had the ability to connect with people, and he helped the delegates communicate with each other. Hurley recalls

(Egan) would say to (an individual), after he called them up to the podium. He'd say did you... want to say something? Did you have a question... (Then) they would tell him that they (had a question)... and somebody explained to them how (and) what to do... And then they'd go back (to their seat)... (Egan) would call a delegate's name, and they would get up... (Then) when others saw that happening, they would... connect with Bill before the (next) meeting started... I think that... made other more experienced delegates... aware... of helping some of the inexperienced (delegates)... He made them feel that... it was no big deal. Just come up and ask... me what you (wanted to) know, and I'll tell you... I couldn't help but hear some of the conversation.²⁰⁷

The Alaskan statehood organizers chose the University of Alaska, for the Alaska Constitutional Convention. The effect of this was to convey a more open-minded attitude, with less partisan politics. Hurley says

²⁰⁶ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁰⁷ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

It was...so different...(than anything else I'd been (involved in). I've been a secretary to the senate, and then watching legislative sessions...for years, and...there was something in the air...I think that it was because (the convention)...wasn't in the legislature. It was at the at the university. I think that atmosphere made a lot of difference.²⁰⁸

Hurley's feelings of place regarding the university were echoed by Vic Fischer and others at the convention. It was easier not to have partisan politics in the university setting. Hurley says

Because of...what the issue was, it wasn't partisan politics. It was...we want to be a state. We want to be able to make our own decisions, and make our own mistakes; and not just to be told what to do by the feds...I think another reason why it was so different from a legislative session was the fact that it was held at a university...Vic Fischer and...several people...mentioned that having it not in the capital, and not in the same place that the legislat(ure) met...created a different feeling among the delegates.²⁰⁹

During her second recorded interview, Hurley also praised the staff at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. While the delegates and staff became close, Hurley recalled that at the convention there was not a lot of interaction between them except at lunchtime. Hurley remembers

It was simply (that) we had a marvelous staff; I mean a very small staff considering all (that) they had to do. There wasn't much chance for interaction except at lunchtime and so forth, because they were working...Everybody was working, and there had been a lot of good...planning beforehand...and the information...was gathered for each delegate to have (read) before they got there...I'm sure all of them read it before they got there.²¹⁰

The preparatory work that had been done created a more equal starting point for both the novice delegate and the more experienced counterpart. Hurley credits this non-confrontational attitude to convention President Egan. Hurley says

²⁰⁸ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁰⁹ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²¹⁰ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

So, they were all on equal footing, except those people who had served in the legislature or in jobs that had something to do with government. (They) had an advantage that... (they) understood the language and didn't have to have a lot of things explained to them... Yet, (for) some people, depending on their personalities, it was easier for them to get up and speak than (for) others. But they were all encouraged (too)... because of the attitude that the chair had. Bill Egan was very open and he wasn't a dictator at all.²¹¹

During her second interview, Hurley observed what it was like for people who came up during the early days of statehood, who had no idea what it was like during the territorial days.

Hurley remembers

A lot of people... moved up here, and they don't have the background of knowing what it was liked when we were a territory... All of the decisions were made for us by people in Washington D.C. We had representation, but it was a voteless delegate that... we had before statehood... The best thing to happen to us, was that we were able to elect one non-voting delegate; who had the smarts and the ability to win over enough votes to so that... they didn't take away all of our (rights).²¹²

Hurley further reflected on how much the Alaskan people relied on the non-voting delegate during territorial days, and how grateful she was. Hurley says

That was the wonderful thing about it you know. For me, as a person who was born in Alaska, and... saw... how long it took... (for) the one voteless delegate... to convince... members of Congress to support legislation... The burden... was on the voteless delegate... (We were) fortunate to have very smart people elected who could do that for us.²¹³

Hurley remembers that Bartlett and Anthony Dimond helped the people of the territory survive those early days. Hurley says

We survived, because we had good people who... like Bartlett... and Anthony Dimond, who when they were in Washington, had the ability and the personality to work with... other... congressman that had votes.²¹⁴

²¹¹ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²¹² Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²¹³ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²¹⁴ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

The convention was implemented as a result of this groundwork laid by Gruening, Bartlett, Anthony Dimond, and all the other Alaskan statehood advocates.

6.9 Hurley's Reflections

The sole purpose of the Alaska Constitutional Convention was the creation of the Alaska Constitution, which is still called "The People's Constitution." Fifty-seven years later, Hurley remembers why:

(The convention) was called by the people of Alaska...through the legislature... We assumed all of the...expenses... I think that's why it's called the people's constitution... I'm no lawyer or...expert, but I think it's...the fact that the delegates were not all a bunch of lawyers writing it, They came from all walks of life And they listened to (the people)... Unfortunately...(there) was only one...Native Alaskan, but...(the delegates) were many people from the...(territory's) communities...and...(they)...weren't all from the most...populated areas.²¹⁵

Hurley formed many connections with people who she had known before and during the convention. These friendships would last a lifetime. One of the most publicly known of her life-long friendships was with Ernest Gruening, one of her first employers. According to Hurley, Gruening's protégé was Bob Bartlett.²¹⁶ Gruening encouraged Bartlett in his political aspirations, with the understanding that Bartlett would support Gruening. This friendship lasted until Bartlett was on his death bed, when the two men would have a falling out that would devastate Gruening, who came to Hurley's home. Hurley remembers

²¹⁵ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²¹⁶ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Bartlett was the senior senator...and...E.G. was very good about...letting him be the senior senator, because...(Gruening had)...been around Washington for so long, it was hard for him to not, with his personality, to just...jump in. There was a falling out at the time E.G. was running for reelection, and Bob was dying...I'll never forget...hearing that statement from Bob on the radio...(Gruening's) heart was broken when...Bob Bartlett was dying, and...(Gruening)...was running for reelection and Bartlett endorsed his opponent...He (Gruening) came to my house. I'd never seen the governor cry, but he was crying...Why did Bob do this? And I...just...said...He's not himself. He's dying, and...let it go at that...(Gruening)...wanted to know if I knew anything about it, and of course I knew plenty. But, I was not going to tell him anything. I just said that Bob was dying, (and) he was in the hospital. He died within a few days of the endorsement.²¹⁷

In the fall of 2013, Bartlett's daughter, Doris Ann, was asked in a casual conversation about the reason for her father's endorsement of Gruening's opponent. She concurred with Hurley's assessment that the reason was because her father was dying.

Alaska Constitutional Convention Chief Clerk Katie Hurley is a living witness to the early days of the people involved in the Alaskan statehood movement and the Alaska Constitutional Convention. She and they, form a living oral history, that fifty-nine years later, in 2016, have endeared her to new generations of Alaskans. An emotional connection of disbelief and awe was established among the participants at the convention within the first few days of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and Hurley felt this awe and disbelief. She says "I remember that you couldn't believe what...you were participating in."²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²¹⁸ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Chapter 7 Doris Ann “D.A.” Bartlett

7.1 The Code and Code Families of D.A. Bartlett

Family (cf) [74]

family (c)
father (c)
Bob (c)
him {Bob} (c)
he {Bob} (c)
mother (c)
mom (c)
Vidie (c)
her {Vidie} (c)
daughter (c)
influence (c)
Ed Bartlett (c)
trucking (c)
Prohibition (c)
baby (c)
teenager (c)
grandmothers (c)
kids (c)
Burke Riley (c)

Work (cf) [100]

work (c)
books (c)
Plato (c)
Phaedrus (c)
literature (c)
job (c)
taught (c)
Ancient Greek (c)
Homer (c)
read (c)
Old English (c)
English teacher (c)
philosophy (c)
bookcase (c)
graduate (c)
college (c)
good stories (c)

People (cf) [53]

people (c)
everybody (c)

Alaska (cf) [52]

Alaska (c)
community (c)
organizations (c)
people (c)
Valdez (c)
Anchorage (c)
Juneau (c)
Fairbanks (c)

Politics (cf) [18]

Democrat (c)
Republican (c)
legislature (c)
conservatives (c)
liberals (c)

Alaska Constitutional Convention {super code} (cf) [183]

delegate (c)
he {Bob} (c)
speech (c)
letters (c)
disagreement (c)
hiding (c)
Jack Coghill (c)
wrote (c)
vision (c)
constitutional convention (c)
everybody (c)
discussion (c)
library cards (c)
Vic Fischer (c)
teletype (c)
librarian (c)
clerk (c)
fighting (c)
Katie Hurley (c)

7.2 Introduction

One of the least known staff positions at the Alaska Constitutional Convention was held by Doris Ann “D.A.” Bartlett, the twenty-one-year-old daughter of Alaskan statehood architect Bob Bartlett. She held three staff positions at the convention: librarian, research assistant, and clerk, working for Chief Clerk Katie Hurley. As with Coghill, Fischer, and Hurley, there are many important codes and themes that are used in the sixty-four pages of typed transcripts of Bartlett’s three recorded interviews, which took place in 2012 and 2013. The codes are grouped together in a variety of code families and one super code, the “Alaska Constitutional Convention,” connects all four of the interviews to this thesis. The different codes and code families are grouped together, and each one shares a strong connection with the others. The code families that are used in this chapter are “family,” “work,” “Alaska,” “politics,” and “Alaska Constitutional Convention.”

7.3 Family

Bartlett uses the code family “family” seventy-four times which contains the codes “family,” “father,” “Bob,” “him (Bob),” “he (Bob),” “mother,” “mom,” “Vidie,” “her (Vidie),” “daughter,” “influence,” “Ed Bartlett,” “trucking,” “Prohibition,” “baby,” “teenager,” “grandmothers,” “kids,” and “Burke Riley.” Of the code family “family” codes that D.A. used, she used the codes “Bob” and “Vidie,” and their sub-codes more than any of the others. She uses the code “Vidie” nineteen times, and the code “Bob” twenty-six times. The count of these particular codes in this particular code family illustrates, in part, the importance of these particular codes.

As a child, Bartlett was a young woman of strong opinions, and when she decided on a course of action, very little would deter her. Bartlett would carry a sign protesting the fact that

she had to leave Alaska with her family, traveling to Washington D.C. In her second fall of 2012 interview, Hurley says of Bartlett

I think... (D.A.)... was about eight... (or)... nine... when... I went to work in the Governor's office... Bob Bartlett (held)... the job of Secretary of Alaska, which was the same as Lieutenant Governor... When Bob was appointed... to the job in Washington D.C., she didn't want to go to Washington... I can remember she had a sign (saying that she didn't want to go).²¹⁹

The close relationship and the stubborn streak that Bartlett shared with her father, began almost immediately after she was born. D.A. Bartlett was born in February of 1934 in Washington D.C. During her first recorded interview, Bartlett admitted to sometimes lying about her birthplace.

I would like to say I was born here (in Alaska). I generally, lied, but my parents were briefly in Washington D.C. when I was born, so I came (to Alaska) at... (the)... age (of) one or under.²²⁰

Nevertheless, for as long as she remembered, Bartlett always thought of herself as an Alaskan, an affinity she shared with her father. His love and self-identity with Alaska began with both of her parents. While in Washington, Bob and Vidie Bartlett missed Alaska tremendously. In his book *Edward Lewis Bob Bartlett of Alaska A Life in Politics*, Claus-M. Naske writes

On February 7, 1934, their first child, Doris Ann, was born in Washington. They wanted to raise their child in the North, and their desire to return to Alaska therefore intensified. The Roosevelt administration extended the Federal Housing Administration to Alaska, and Bob's opportunity arose when the job of assistant territorial director opened in Alaska.²²¹

²¹⁹ Katie Hurley, Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²²⁰ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²²¹ Claus-M. Naske, *Edward Lewis Bob Bartlett of Alaska a Life in Politics* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1979), 28.

One of the unique aspects of her childhood, was the fact that Bartlett was told to call her parents “Bob” and “Vidie,” for Bob Bartlett did not believe people should be called by their titles. D.A. Bartlett says

...I don’t call them mother and father. I call them Bob and Vidie...Bob had a thing about it. He liked people to be called by names, rather than relationship terms. That was sort of weird...He wasn’t big about it. He would not like me to be called mom...My sister Suzie was...Her kids call her mom...She had them after he died...I liked (being called D.A.)...There was something special to us.²²²

Bob Bartlett was raised in an Alaska that was an even more isolated wilderness than it was in the mid-fifties, at the time of the Alaska Constitutional Convention. D.A. Bartlett recalled hearing about a two day trip from Fairbanks to Chena Hot Springs.

Bob’s father, Ed Bartlett, who had a trucking business...They (also) had horses and a freight business. He, and some friends went out...(to) Chena Hot Springs, but it...was a two day trip together there...There really wasn’t a good road.²²³

By comparison, in 2016, the road trip from Fairbanks to Chena Hot Springs takes about two hours. Bartlett admitted that her father’s early influence has shaped her personality, and they were very close. Bartlett says

...(I felt)...I...want to be like that, and...I’ve tried to shaped my personality that way...Obviously your father has a lot of influence, and...by the time I went to high school, he was working so hard, we didn’t see very much of him. But, when I was...little...he wasn’t working so hard. We would go fishing, and do things like that.²²⁴

Bartlett went on to say that Bob had a gift for conversation and for putting people at ease. However, she was not the only one who admired her father for this. Others shared their memories with Bartlett. She recalls

²²² D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²²³ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²²⁴ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

...He was always interested in everything... One time Rudy Kreji was saying (that) one time they were... snowed in somewhere on an airplane, and they couldn't travel... He (Bob) got everybody together and... asked the what they did for a living, and he got everybody talking... He asked a lot of questions 'cause he wants to know about people. He is really interested in people... Here I am talking about him in the present tense.²²⁵

More than half a century later, Bartlett's connection to the past is strongly tied in with emotion and memory. Much of this revolves around her father. This emotional tie encourages her to retell her story in the present tense.

7.4 Work

Bartlett's love of Ancient Greek and Latin studies, have led to her life's work of teaching and study. During her three recorded interviews, Bartlett uses the code family "work" one hundred times, thus emphasizing its importance to her. The code family "work" contains the codes "work," "books," "Plato," "Phaedrus," "literature," "job," "taught," "teach," "Ancient Greek," "Homer," "read," "Old English," "English teacher," "philosophy," "bookcase," "graduated," "college," "and "good stories." Bartlett still speaks fondly of her years as a teacher. Bartlett says

Well I taught, and I loved teaching. It's one of those things... but I don't know what I would say about it, except that I had opportunity to do it, so I'm thankful. I would be doing it still, except that I have gotten old, and I get tired easily, which I resent.²²⁶

Memories of certain events and times in her life are strong in Bartlett's mind. She recalled them by using the emotion that is tied with memory. Although she tired easily, Bartlett was able to recall these memories with clarity.

Bartlett carried stubbornness into her adult life. Her father, Bob Bartlett, also was stubborn and worked long hours, putting a great deal of effort and enthusiasm into his work.

²²⁵ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²²⁶ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

D.A. Bartlett's work ethic and her attitude towards work were developed from observing her father. As a young adult, Bartlett used this learned behavior in both her college experience at Middlebury and in her work at the Alaska Constitutional Convention where this passion for work also influenced her life-long love of learning. Along with English and literature, Bartlett learned to read Greek and Latin; however, the young scholar always leaned toward Greek, and Plato was her favorite. In her later life reflections on her attachment to the Greek scholars, Bartlett says

I feel attached to them...(my books)...even the ones I haven't read for a long time. I just like to know they're there...It's a little crazy...The Greek books, and all my files of Greek stuff. I'm never going to read these files again. They're taking up a lot of space. But, there's something, I feel like a part of me would go if they did.²²⁷

After her work at the Alaska Constitutional Convention, Bartlett held a variety of jobs. Bartlett remembers

I...worked for a newspaper for a little while, and then, since I wasn't earning enough money, I got a job...in the administration as a clerk in the bottom row. I was typing checks to people all day. I made more money than working on the newspaper. I think I continued working on the newspaper also...(After the convention) I think of how wonderful it was, and from then on, I was sort of having loose ends. I think I should have found another constitutional convention.²²⁸

After she held a variety of jobs, Bartlett discovered her true passion, teaching, and she earned her PhD later in life, in 1977 at the University of Oregon. Bartlett's PhD. was in Ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance studies, and traditional Alaska Native literature. Afterwards, Bartlett spent several years teaching as an adjunct in Fairbanks before being invited to be a professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In May 2004, Bartlett was granted Emerita status as an English

²²⁷ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²²⁸ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

professor. Over her tenure as a teacher, Bartlett taught a wide variety of English and language subjects. Bartlett recalls

I taught...English, composition, Mythology, and a lot of other...(classes)...I taught philosophy a few times. And of course...Humanities, which was all of the...art and music and literature of the world in one semester...(I also taught Latin)...but, I didn't do it in the classroom. I did it correspondence. I did Greek too, for a while, but just not enough people signed up for it, so we had to quit that. The Greek was my favorite, but I've lost it entirely...The Ancient Greeks just wrote some fascinating stuff.²²⁹

7.5 People

While Bartlett was more reserved than either Coghill, Fischer, or Hurley, she noticed people. From a very early age, Bartlett learned the art of connecting with people, and this would contribute to her work at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. Bartlett uses the code family “people” fifty-three times during her three recorded interviews, and contains the codes “people” and “everybody.” During her interviews, Bartlett recalled the people at the Alaska Constitutional Convention.²³⁰

7.6 Alaska

The aspect of community at the convention is important to Bartlett, and she uses the code family “Alaska” fifty-two times during her three recorded interviews. The code family “Alaska” contains the codes “Alaska,” “community,” “organizations,” “people,” “Valdez,” “Anchorage,” “Juneau,” and “Fairbanks.” For example, at the beginning of her second interview, Bartlett identifies herself as an Alaskan. The Alaskan identity, which Bartlett claimed, includes the idea of the frontier, and a fresh start was considered very important to the statehood advocates. In her book *Go for It! Finding Your Own Frontier*, Dr. Judith Kleinfeld writes

²²⁹ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²³⁰ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interviews One, Two, and Three (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012, Fall 2012, and Spring 2013. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Mere land space does not create a frontier. A driving spirit creates a frontier. A restless imagination creates a frontier... In America, with the expansion west, frontier came to mean not a limit but the very opposite... a limitless realm of possibility. A frontier can be a place we create in our imaginations. Many people come to Alaska and see nothing but ordinary American cities... Others see the frontier romance... In the American imagination, the frontier is a realm of risk and adventure, a place where people have the courage to take a stand, to go for it.²³¹

During her three recorded interviews, D.A. Bartlett continually illustrated this idea of the frontier. According to Bartlett, the delegates and staff at the Alaska Constitutional Convention believed that they were doing something that was highly unusual. Bartlett says

Everybody was very excited... We were going to get a chance to do something that... had not been done, to write a constitution before the state was here, so that we could really figure it out.²³²

Their excitement was palpable; the delegates were exploring the “frontier” of a new government. As Kleinfeld says, “... they were taking a stand...”²³³ in their support of statehood for Alaska.

While there were many statehood advocates in Alaska and the rest of the United States, there were also some individuals who opposed statehood. Bartlett says

Ernest (Gruening) and Bob (Bartlett) were very influential... Lots of people were involved with it... (James) Wickersham... up to Tony Dimond... (two people) who had put bills in for statehood... (Some) were just bringing up the idea. They couldn't even make a fight for it... (Some) people didn't feel the time was right. I mean, people Outside... and there was such strong disapproval of it by the fishing industry.²³⁴

The fishing industry, controlled by interests outside Alaska, such as the Guggenheims and the Morgans, did not want to lose control of the profits that the Alaskan Fishing industry brought.

The majority of the fish traps in Alaska were controlled by outside interests, who took the

²³¹ Judith Kleinfeld, PhD., *Go for It! Finding Your Own Frontier* (Washington: Epicenter Press, 2003) 29, 30, 31, & 33.

²³² D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²³³ Judith Kleinfeld, *Go for It! Finding Your Own Frontier*, 1-192.

²³⁴ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

majority of both the fish and economic profit outside of Alaska. These outside interests definitely did not want statehood for Alaska, because they were afraid of federal control shifting to state authority. Whitehead writes

The Seattle interests were fearful that statehood would bring state management of the fishery and hence the abolition of the fish trap—as provided by the fish trap ordinance from the Alaska Constitutional Convention.²³⁵

Indeed, Alaskans were concerned that such high volume of processing would cause fish shortages and that the end result would be a loss of livelihood for many Alaskan fishermen, which could decimate the future Alaskan economy. After the convention, Ordinance Three “The Abolition of Fish Traps,”²³⁶ was one of the main reasons for the approval of Ordinance One “The Ratification of the Constitution.”²³⁷ The convention delegates and other statehood advocates believed that the control of resources and their profits, belonged in the state. Article Eight of the Alaska Constitution deals with resources.²³⁸ Article Eight Section One of the *Alaska Constitution* states “It is the policy of the State to encourage the settlement of its land and the development of its resources.”²³⁹

7.7 Politics

During her interviews, Bartlett used the code family “politics” eighteen times. The code family “politics” contains the codes “Democrat,” “Republican,” “legislature,” “conservatives,” and “liberals.” While the delegates were all there for one purpose, disagreements did happen; however, these disagreements were very rarely about partisan politics. Bartlett says

²³⁵ John Whitehead, *Completing the Union Alaska, Hawai'i and the Battle for Statehood*, xxiii.

²³⁶ Gordon S. Harrison, *Alaska's Constitution a Citizen's Guide*, 1-264.

²³⁷ Gordon S. Harrison, *Alaska's Constitution a Citizen's Guide*, 1-264.

²³⁸ Gordon S. Harrison, *Alaska's Constitution a Citizen's Guide*, 1-264.

²³⁹ The Delegates, *The Alaska Constitution* (Fairbanks: The University of Alaska, 1956), 24.

They were all committed to that (writing the constitution)... The Democrats and the Republican politics didn't come into it that much really, because when you got in the committees you were fighting about other things.²⁴⁰

7.8 Alaska Constitutional Convention

During her three recorded interviews, D.A. Bartlett used the code family "Alaska Constitutional Convention" one-hundred eighty-three times. Like in the Coghill, Fischer, and Hurley interviews, the code family "Alaska Constitutional Convention" is the super code of this research, at the center of this thesis, and the main reason that these four individuals know each other. The code family "Alaska Constitutional Convention" contains the codes "delegate," "he (Bob)," "speech," "letters," "disagreement," "hiding," "Jack Coghill," "wrote," "vision," "constitutional convention," "everybody," "discussion," "library cards," "Vic Fischer," "teletype," "important ideas," "librarian," "clerk," "fighting," and "Katie Hurley." During her second recorded interview, Bartlett further discusses how convention delegates did not allow political differences to interfere with the task at hand, when she says

I wouldn't wonder if Jack (Coghill; he was a Republican) was on the other side, (than Vic) Fischer, (who was a Democrat), of a great many issues, but people were polite in those days. People agreed to differ...so that we could all be excited about it...without worrying about, my team is going to prevail.²⁴¹

To Bartlett, manners and mutual respect for different opinions were encouraged among different communities in Alaska. The memory of community is strong in Bartlett's mind. Her family was Bartlett's first community as a child, as a young adult, the communities that Bartlett experienced included both Middlebury College and the Alaska Constitutional Convention. In her recollection the members of the convention were also members of the Alaskan community who

²⁴⁰ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁴¹ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

came together in the cause of statehood. During her first recorded interview, Bartlett defines community when she says

It's generally living near each other, but not necessarily... (They) share important... things, important... things, important ideas... (and) important activities... (The) one thing when you live closer together (is that the) community organizations are wonderful... They keep people together, not quite (as) tight as the convention, but you have somebody then, a big family.²⁴²

However, many individuals at the convention must have believed that the young girl fresh out of Middlebury College had joined the staff of the Alaska Constitutional Convention because of who her father was. Bob Bartlett held his daughter in high regard, had a great respect for her observational abilities, and would ask D.A. Bartlett to be his eyes and ears at the convention.

During her third recorded interview, Bartlett says

...He had propositioned somebody else to do that kind of thing for him... She didn't do it very well compared to me. He told me that at the end, that... I had given him more information than anybody else.²⁴³

The delegates at the Alaska Constitutional Convention were committed to the cause of statehood and to writing the best constitution that they could. They and the others who worked at the convention might have had their disagreements, but they were there to do a job, and they wanted nothing to detract from that fact. Bartlett says

I think that it was beginning to be what it became, very soon... Everybody came... (They all) wanted to do this, (and) wanted to do it very well, so that it would help the statehood movement. They wanted to write a good constitution, but, when they got to writing it, they really were concerned to... write the best constitution they could.²⁴⁴

²⁴² D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁴³ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview Three (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2013. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁴⁴ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Bartlett, who had just graduated from Middlebury College, compared the delegates' relationship to a group of college students when she says

They fought sometimes. They got along like pretty close friends, it seemed to me at the time... I was just graduated from college, and they got along better than a senior class in the college world.²⁴⁵

One of the specific arguments among the delegates at the convention was about the question of a governor. Bartlett says

We had a lot of arguments about a strong and a weak governor... We decided that the strong governor was very important, and that you needed one. You needed some place for the buck stops here; somebody with a little vision. And (while) in... office... he could use vision... He could have been weakened very much.²⁴⁶

Another discussion, or argument, that Bartlett remembers is the one over judges. Bartlett says

Everybody knew what people's position(s) were on a lot of things... like the election of judges, and (the) attorney... general... (That)... is the one I remember. There... would be considerable discussion, and the discussion would... involve a little argument.²⁴⁷

During his one recorded interview, Fischer also remembers discussion on the judiciary article.²⁴⁸

However, at the beginning of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, committees and tasks were being assigned or voted on. D.A. Bartlett had three official jobs: she was a clerk who worked for Katie Hurley, she was a convention researcher, and she was the convention librarian. Bartlett says

²⁴⁵ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁴⁶ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁴⁷ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁴⁸ Vic Fischer, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

I had a three-faceted role...one was librarian...one was research assistant...and one was (a clerk. I worked with Katie Hurley) and Tom Stewart, because the whole library was his really...He had collected the books on this kind of thing... There was a secretary pool... The library was here, the secretarial pool was here, and the...(teletype)...bring(ing) in the news of the world...so I kept an eye on the teletype...I had thought I would be doing a lot more...I did some Girl Friday stuff, but not much. People would send me to look up things. I'd look them up, or I'd say we don't have that book.²⁴⁹

As a research assistant, Bartlett remembers being asked to research states' attorney generals.

Bartlett says

(One thing I was asked to)...research...was...somebody asked me (to) find out how many states had elected attorney generals, and how many...h(ad) it the other way. So, I had to go and...(research)...the other way...I had to go and get books, like almanacs.²⁵⁰

Bartlett was asked to do this particular research for background on the Judiciary Article.

During all three of her interviews, Bartlett minimized her role at the Alaska

Constitutional Convention. However, Hurley recollects Bartlett as an intelligent young woman.

Hurley says

She went to high school in D.C., and then she went to...Middlebury College...She had just graduated from Middlebury...when we had the convention, and she was in Alaska. I think her major had been English...She did something with the...newsletter every day...We had such a small staff. Everybody pitched in, and did all kinds of jobs...You had to have job descriptions, but everybody did way more than their job descriptions...She (D.A. Bartlett) was very bright...and a lot of fun.²⁵¹

The newsletter was not the only thing Bartlett would write every day at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. She was asked by her father, Alaska statehood advocate Bob Bartlett, to be his eyes

²⁴⁹ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview Three (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2013. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁵⁰ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁵¹ Katie Hurley, Recorded Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

and ears at the convention. Bob Bartlett loved to write letters, and D.A. Bartlett wrote her father daily reports. Bartlett says

He was a very great letter writer. He had a rule in the office, that twenty-four hours wouldn't go by without responding to... a letter that was received... He loved to write letters, so I'm sure I got letters from him too... unhappily I didn't keep them.²⁵²

Bartlett wrote her father every day because she believed that there would be more to say if she wrote him every day instead of once-a-week. Bartlett says

I wrote him every day because long ago I had discovered I had nothing to write if I wrote him once a week. I would say what happened this week, and not be able to think of anything. But, if I wrote him every day, then I would remember what happened that day... at the convention.²⁵³

According to Bartlett, she didn't want anyone at the convention to know what she was doing.

I would sneak in a corner. I didn't want people to know what I was writing, 'cause I was writing about them... particularly when George Sundborg came by, I... flipped the typewriter down... This was the first thing I did out of college, and it was just a lark... I felt that everything was important. So, I was writing down everything... I said things about people... (for instance) George was grumpy today.²⁵⁴

While Bob Bartlett didn't want or feel the need to be involved in the day to day operation of the convention, however, he wanted to know what was going on. Bartlett says

He stayed away, because he didn't want to be a big influence, and he trusted these people to make a good constitution. And they did... He (Bob) wanted to know what was going on, he wanted to know (what) the undercurrents (were), as... what was said on the floor.²⁵⁵

²⁵² D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview Three (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2013. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁵³ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview Three (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2013. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁵⁴ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview Three (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2013. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁵⁵ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interviews Two and Three (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012 & Spring 2013. Fairbanks, Alaska.

7.9 Bartlett's Reflections

In her reports to her father, Bartlett included observations that interested her, and the perceptions that she included in her report were detailed and accurate. As D.A. Bartlett stated earlier in this chapter, Bob Bartlett considered his daughter's reports during the convention more intellectually comprehensive than most. Bartlett says

I was sitting by a typewriter, (and) so I just wrote it to him as I perceived it happening...I don't remember what I said...I just...didn't want people to know that I was giving him (Bob)...anything they...might be (saying). I can remember hiding...(a)...letter, when George Sundborg walked in the office one time.²⁵⁶

D.A. Bartlett has more to her story than just wanting to keep a secret. She was an extremely private person; however, she played a pivotal role at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. As her father, Bob Bartlett's eyes and ears, D.A. Bartlett contributed to his understanding of daily events as they unfolded. However, her role in the Alaska Constitutional Convention and the Alaskan Statehood Movement is not known by many historians. During her second recorded interview, Bartlett states that Bob Bartlett was pleased to have detailed reports from many different sources, thereby having a more complete understanding of an event such as the Alaska Constitutional Convention. Nevertheless, the perspective that Bartlett was able to present to her father was a unique one. She represented the point of view of a young woman who saw the world through fresh eyes, and was interested in everything she saw and experienced. Bartlett says

²⁵⁶ D.A. Bartlett Recorded Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhillier), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

(My father was pleased)...to be kept up to date with...a daily report of what's going on. It's a lot more than...(Bob)...generally...(got)...People would write him when they had something on their mind. They would want it to get to him, where(as), I was just telling him everything that went on that I knew about... There were a number of things...that he (Bob) kept track of...that people didn't know he was keeping track of.²⁵⁷

Bartlett wrote her father every day, and according to D.A. Bartlett, Bob Bartlett used these letters in his activities in support of the statehood movement.²⁵⁸ Bartlett says

He just knew some of the little things about the...major things that were included in the statehood movement. He knew that these people fought one morning, and came out with this answer...which you...(could) get any place else, (but with)...more detail.²⁵⁹

As of 2015, D.A. Bartlett's letters to her father Bob Bartlett during the Alaska Constitutional Convention have disappeared, and Bartlett does not remember what happened to them. During one interview, Bartlett suggested that her mother hid the letters or destroyed them. Bartlett remembers

I think that my mother hid those letters, if they still existed. She didn't want...I think that my mother destroyed them (the letters). I don't think they are in existence now.²⁶⁰

In another recorded interview Bartlett remembered her mother giving some of her letters to someone. She went on to suggest that she herself gave them to her son. Bartlett says

I didn't know I was doing anything...I didn't think of those letters, as being such a big deal...My mother...gave...a bunch of her letters to Claus Naske, (but) didn't give him those...I discovered them among...her things...I gave them to my oldest son. And, I don't know what he did with them.²⁶¹

²⁵⁷ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interviews Two & Three (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012 & Spring 2013. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁵⁸ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interviews One, Two, & Three (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012, Fall 2012, and spring 2013. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁵⁹ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interviews Two. (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁶⁰ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁶¹ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview Three (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2013. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Throughout much of her adult life, Bartlett traveled and lived in different places within the United States, and it is not difficult to see how a few letters could get lost in the packing and unpacking of personal items.

During her three recorded interviews, Bartlett was always humble and modest about her contributions at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. Emotional memory, however, was as strong in Bartlett, as it is in Coghill, Fischer, and Hurley. Bartlett remembers

It was a very emotional business, the constitutional convention. We just really bonded. Everybody was working for it. Not just the delegates, everybody... When they were finished and broke-up, it was just... [takes a couple of deep breaths]... my family's all moving away. I wish I could remember more... (During the convention) I was on a high. I was on a high all the way through. It was just brilliant, wonderful, and we were walking on top of clouds.²⁶²

More than fifty years have passed since the end of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, but the memories remain strong, tied together by the emotional impact of what Bartlett experienced and observed.

²⁶² D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interviews One & Three (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012 & Spring 2013. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Chapter 8 Analysis

8.1 The Tables of the Codes and Code Families of Analysis

Table 8.1: Code Family “Family;” Comparison of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.

Code Family	Coghill (58)	Fischer (17)	Hurley (47)	Bartlett (74)
<i>family</i>	family	mother	mother	family
	father	father	father	father
	grandfather	adventurer/s	dad	Bob
	dad	travel/ing/ed	stepfather	him
	he	values	family	he
		beliefs	obedient daughter	mother
			daughter	mom
				Vidie
				her
				daughter
				influence
				Ed Bartlett
				trucking
				Prohibition
				baby
				teenager
				grandmothers
				kids
				Burke Riley

Table 8.2: Code Family “Work;” Comparison of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.

Code Family	Coghill (40)	Fischer (36)	Hurley (53)	Bartlett (100)
<i>work</i>	work	education	work	work
	community	educational	job	books
	society	books	employment service	Plato
	store	professor	Secretary of the Senate	Phaedrus
	butcher	Political Science	clerk stenographer	literature
	printer	work/ed/ing	Chief of Staff	job
	Schoolhouse Johnny	job	secretary	taught
	legislature	planner	teacher	teach
		city planner	education	Ancient Greek
		state planner	advice	Homer
				read
				Old English
				English teacher
				philosophy
				bookcase
				graduated
				college
				good stories

Table 8.3: Code Family “People,” Comparison of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.

Code Family	Coghill (22)	Fischer (43)	Hurley (114)	Bartlett (53)
<i>people</i>	people	people	Alaskans	people
	everybody	person	Ernest Gruening	everyone
		Fairbanksans	Bob Bartlett	
		everybody/ies	person	
			people	
			everyone	

Table 8.4: Code Family “Alaska,” Comparison of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.

Code Family	Coghill (19)	Fischer (63)	Hurley (35)	Bartlett (52)
<i>Alaska</i>	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska
	Alaskans	community/ies		community
	place	Arctic		organizations
		city		people
		Fairbanks		Valdez
		Anchorage		Anchorage
		United States		Juneau
		Congress		Fairbanks
		issues		
		statehood		

Table 8.5: Code Family “Politics,” Comparison of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.

Code Family	Coghill (7)	Fischer (8)	Hurley (20)	Bartlett (18)
<i>politics</i>	politics	political beliefs	Republicans	Democrat
	political	conservation	Democrats	Republican
	politician	Democratic	Committee for Democrats	legislature
		Democrat/s	partisan politics	conservatives
		Republican	politics	liberals
			politically	
			session	

Table 8.6: Code Family “Alaska Constitutional Convention;” Comparison of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, Bartlett.

Code Family	Coghill (44)	Fischer (19)	Hurley (100)	Bartlett (183)
<i>Alaska Constitutional Convention</i>	constitutional convention	Alaska Constitutional Convention	Alaska Constitutional Convention	delegate
	convention	constitutional convention	constitutional convention	he (Bob)
	Committees (connected with the convention)	delegate/s	convention	speech
	reapportionment or apportionment	Coghill	bill	letters
		Bill Egan	staff	disagreement
		unifier	delegate	hiding
		session	Bill Egan	Jack Coghill
		Alaska Salmon Industry	Vic Fischer	wrote
			Jack Coghill	vision
			D.A. Bartlett	constitutional convention
			university	everybody
			Chief Clerk	discussion
			Mildred Herman	library cards
			Public Administration Service	Vic Fischer
			everybody	Katie Hurley
				teletype
				important ideas
				librarian
				clerk
				fighting

Table 8.7: Code Family “Alaska Constitution;” Comparison of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.

Code Family	Coghill (7)	Fischer (64)	Hurley (5)	Bartlett (17)
<i>Alaska Constitution</i>	constitution	vote/d	constitution	constitution
	state constitution	judiciary article	constitutional studies	
		judiciary branch	people’s constitution	
		judiciary rulings		
		transcript/s		
		transcription		
		framework		
		Bill of Rights		
		Declaration of Rights		
		Alaska State Senate		
		state elections		
		state judges		
		state land		
		state resources		
		articles		

Table 8.8: Code Family “Freemason;” Coghill.

Code Family	Coghill (29)
<i>Freemason</i>	Freemason
	Mason
	Masonic
	Scottish Rite
	Sojourners
	Jesters
	fraternity
	the organization

Table 8.9: Code Family “Structure;” Coghill.

Code Family	Coghill (30)
<i>structure</i>	throughout
	territorial
	family
	Masonic
	government
	community
	property
	structure of the inner-soul
	institutional
	apportionment
	whole
	middle
	Christian
	political

Table 8.10: Codes “Principles” and “Philosophy;” Coghill.

Code	Coghill (10)
<i>principles</i>	principles
<i>philosophy</i>	On the basic structure of a Scottish family

Table 8.11: Code Family “Camaraderie;” Coghill.

Code Family	Coghill (2)
<i>camaraderie</i>	camaraderie
	to build a civil government

Table 8.12: Code Family “Unity;” Fischer.

Code Family	Fischer (83)
unity	place
	agreement
	agree
	majority
	many
	unified
	phenomenal
	experience/s/ed
	feeling/s
	together
	compromise
	years, as in passage of time
	common purpose
	respectful
	camaraderie
	fellow man

Table 8.13: Code Family “Statehood;” Hurley.

Code Family	Hurley (45)
<i>statehood</i>	bill
	vote
	voter
	issue
	Alaska Statehood Committee
	Operation Statehood
	statehood
	Statehood bill
	United States

8.2 Introduction

In the process of thematic analysis of oral narrative, the researcher extrapolates the significant words that the interviewee used. Because there is more than one narrative in this study, thematic analysis creates an opportunity to compare the narratives. The tables for the study in this project establish commonalities and differences within the narratives. In the case of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett, this analysis helped to establish how the threads of their life, different though they were, led them to a single event that began in November of 1955 and ended in February 1956: The Alaska Constitutional Convention. A thematic analysis of the interviews with Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett provides a unique opportunity to examine the content of their memories of the Alaska Constitutional Convention. This analysis reveals that what is discussed by one interviewee in one area is also discussed by other interviewees, illustrating the common occurrences of the convention. These commonalities do not distract from the individuality of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett.

8.3 Family

Family is an important term that connects the narratives of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett. Coghill uses the code family “family” fifty-eight times; Fischer seventeen times; Hurley forty-seven times; and Bartlett seventy-four times. During Fischer’s interview, he did not focus on family as much as Coghill, Hurley, and Bartlett.

Coghill had two short non-recorded interviews and two longer recorded interviews. Coghill’s initial interviews were connected to his membership in the Freemasons, to which his father, his father’s family, and his wife’s family belonged. The Freemasons, according to

Coghill, emphasize self-improvement and community involvement.²⁶³ This membership would eventually lead Coghill to a life of service and the Alaska Constitutional Convention.

Fischer had one long recorded phone interview. His interview dealt a great deal with his life's work, the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and urging people to vote. Fischer's low usage of the code family "family," illustrated the complicated emotions that connected him to his memories.

Hurley had two recorded phone interviews. Hurley was devoted to the memories of her family, and allowed them to be very much a part of her life. During her interviews, Hurley put a great deal of emphasis on the Alaskan Statehood Movement and the Alaska Constitutional Convention.

Bartlett had three long recorded interviews in which she talked a great deal about her father and the devotion that she had to his memory, and this explains her high usage of this code family that showed her complete devotion to her father's memory. Like Hurley, Bartlett also spent a great deal of time talking about the convention.

The lone difference between the interviewees' use of the code family "family" was in Fischer's use of this code in comparison with Coghill, Hurley, and Bartlett. Coghill, Hurley, and Bartlett in their connection to family, is that Coghill, Hurley, and Bartlett had very tightly knit established family units; Fischer, who was close to his mother, clearly struggled with his paternal relationship. His father was absent during much of his childhood, and this affected Fischer throughout his life. Nevertheless, Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett were encouraged by their parents to put forth their best efforts in whatever work they did.

²⁶³ Jack Coghill, Non-recorded Interviews (by Leslie Drumhillier), Fall 2009. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Other significant differences between the interviewees is use of this code family are that Coghill's codes do not contain a female presence, illustrating a significant gender difference. Fischer's codes contain the code "belief," Hurley's codes deal with relationships, and Bartlett goes into great detail with different ways to say "father" and "mother," her own children, and her father's family during Prohibition. As stated earlier, these differences are very much tied to emotion in recall. Family relationships are important to this study because often a child learns behavior while observing the interactions of his parents and how they relate to the world. Value systems that are formed in youth, will directly affect how individual people interact in a variety of communities as they grow up.

8.4 Work

Work was very important to all four interviewees, and Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett all worked from the time they were very young. This shaped the roles that they each had at the Alaska Constitutional Convention, as well as their work in later life. For example, Coghill used the code family "work" forty times during his two short non-recorded interviews and his two recorded interviews. During one interview, with Coghill's son, Jeff, sitting in, Coghill talked about his belief that work and a self-help attitude led to success. From the time that he was a child, Coghill was expected to work and contribute to the family community and this taught him to be part of a larger community such as the Alaska Constitutional Convention.

Fischer used the code family "work" thirty-six times during his one recorded phone interview. Fischer's career growth was displayed as a journey that led to the Alaska Constitutional Convention and his later work in education.

Hurley used the same code family fifty-three times during her two recorded phone interviews. Hurley was guided toward her life's work by her mother. During her interviews,

Hurley expressed not anger or agitation at this fact but an acceptance and a willingness to get the job done.

Bartlett used the code family “work” one-hundred times during her three recorded interviews. The fact that her usage of this code family is so much higher than the others has to do with Bartlett’s statements about her father’s work, as well as her own. The rest of Bartlett’s statements about her work, are about her work that takes place after the Alaska Constitutional Convention.

The commonalities of the code family “work” are among the most significant among all four narratives as they illustrate a deep connection to the interviewees’ life’s work. Furthermore, at one point in their lives, Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett were all involved in some way with education. The differences among these four individuals within this particular code of “education,” involve exactly what they did. Coghill and Hurley were involved in the politics of education, and Fischer and Bartlett were professors and involved in the art of teaching. One difference in the interviews is Bartlett’s slightly higher use of the code family “work,” and Coghill, Fischer, and Hurley’s use on the lower end of the spectrum. Bartlett used eighteen codes, Fischer and Hurley each used ten codes, and Coghill used eight. A more significant difference is what the codes deal with in the four narratives: Coghill’s discuss his jobs, politics, and society; Fischer’s discuss his jobs, planning, and education; Hurley’s discuss her work as a secretary, and some of her roles in education; and Bartlett goes into detail with different aspects of her education, and literature. While these differences are important, the commonalities of hard work and effort explain much of their success in life.

8.5 People

The Alaskan people have always been important to Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett, they were to other statehood advocates. All four interviewees involved with this research showed commonality in their use of the code family “people.” Coghill used this code family twenty-two times; Fischer forty-three times; Hurley one-hundred fourteen times; and Bartlett fifty-three times. While it is clear this code family, represents commonality among Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett, one difference in their use of the code family “people” is illustrated by their use of general and specific terms. For example, Coghill and Bartlett spoke about “people,” “everyone,” and “everybody;” Fischer and Hurley spoke about more specific names for people, such as Fischer’s use of the code “Fairbanksans,” and Hurley’s use of the codes “Ernest Gruening,” and “Bob Bartlett.” This reflects the fact that Hurley had contact with so many people through her work with statehood organizer Ernest Gruening. Coghill, Fischer, and Bartlett were exposed to many people, but not to the extent that Hurley must have been. Hurley’s higher use of the code family “people” is further illustrated by the number of codes in her code family: she had five, Fischer had four, and Coghill and Bartlett had two.

8.6 Alaska

Alaska had long been held as a high ideal of place by the Alaskan statehood advocates. Alaska was a place that many non-Alaskans aspired to, and it was considered to have a romantic connection to the last frontier and the untamed wilderness. The ideal of “Alaska” was the goal and the destination, even for those who lived there, and Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett, were no exception. They all identified themselves as Alaskan. Coghill used the code family “Alaska” nineteen times with three codes; Fischer used this particular code family sixty-three

times with ten codes; Hurley used this code family thirty-five times with one code; and Bartlett used the code family “Alaska” fifty-two times with eight codes.

While Alaska was important to each one of the four research participants and illustrated the commonality among them. Fischer’s high use of this code family illustrates the importance of place from a time when he was very young.²⁶⁴ Fischer was raised in Germany and Russia and aspired to live in the arctic. The importance of Alaska is also illustrated by Bartlett who pretended that she was born in Alaska, when she was younger.²⁶⁵ However, differences were illustrated by the different codes within each of the four narratives. Coghill’s codes deal with place and the state of Alaska; Fischer’s deal with Alaska, different communities, statehood, and Congress; Hurley just uses the general term Alaska; and Bartlett uses different communities, organization, and people. Nevertheless, the differences suggested by this code family are a lot more closely connected than in other code families.

8.7 Politics

The Alaska Constitutional Convention, and indeed the Alaskan Statehood Movement, was embedded in politics. At the time, different political groups had different agendas, but on the subject of statehood for Alaska they were in agreement. This is also illustrated by the narratives of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett. In the narratives, the code family “politics” was not as highly used as some other code families in this research; however, its importance within the structure of this thesis is significant and illustrates the commonality between Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett. Coghill used the code family “politics” seven times with three codes; Fischer, eight times with five codes; Hurley, twenty times with seven codes; and Bartlett,

²⁶⁴ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁶⁵ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview One (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

eighteen times with five codes. This code family was important enough for each one of the four narratives to use in this way, and the differences are more subtle than in other code families. However, one significant difference between these different narratives is that Coghill's codes in this code family are centered around the politician; Fischer's codes center on political parties; Hurley's codes focus on partisan politics; and Bartlett's codes focus on political parties. The differences are further illustrated by the higher usage of this code family by Hurley and Bartlett, and the lower usage of these codes by Coghill and Fischer, suggesting the division is between staff and delegate, and between men and women.

8.8 Alaska Constitutional Convention

The ultimate political goal for the delegates at the Alaska Constitutional Convention was to draft a model constitution, and, according to Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett, they succeeded. The code family "Alaska Constitutional Convention" was the super code of this thesis, and established the central theme that weaves its way throughout this project. Coghill used the code family "Alaska Constitutional Convention" forty-four times with four codes; Fischer, nineteen times with eight codes; Hurley, one-hundred times with fifteen codes; and Bartlett, one-hundred eighty-three times with twenty codes. The memories of the Alaska Constitutional Convention were embedded in the minds of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett, and the commonality between their memories was the event, the place, and how it defined each of the four individuals in this thesis.

The differences in their memories have to do with what their codes focus on. On the surface the staff members, Hurley and Bartlett, used the code family "Alaska Constitutional Convention" significantly more than the delegates in this project. There is also a division in usage between the men and women; however, this is not as significant as the differences between

staff members Hurley and Bartlett, and delegates Coghill and Fischer. The focus for Hurley and Bartlett was the convention itself, and the focus for Coghill and Fischer was the Alaska Constitution. The most significant difference is that the individual codes contained within each individual's code family were diverse, and specific for each individual's interview. Coghill's codes "constitutional convention," "convention," "Committees" (connected with the convention), and reapportionment or apportionment were focused specifically on his job at the convention, and on the event of the convention. Fischer's codes "Alaska Constitutional Convention," "constitutional convention," "delegate/s," "Coghill," "Bill Egan," "unifier," "session," and "Alaska Salmon Industry" dealt with specific people, including Coghill himself as a delegate, and Bill Egan as the president of the convention. However, Fischer's codes still focused on the delegate's role. He is also the only one to mention the "Alaska Salmon Industry."

On the other hand, Hurley's codes "Alaska Constitutional Convention," "constitutional convention," "convention," "bill," "staff," "delegate," "Bill Egan," "Vic Fischer," "Jack Coghill," "D.A. Bartlett," "university," "Chief Clerk," "Mildred Herman," "Public Administration Service," and "everybody" focus not only on her specific job, but on the event of the convention, the staff and delegates, specific people, and organizations. Furthermore, Bartlett's codes "delegate," "he (Bob)" "speech," "letters," "disagreement," "hiding," "Coghill," "wrote," "vision," "constitutional convention," "everybody," "discussion," "library cards," "Vic Fischer," "Katie Hurley," "teletype," "important ideas," "librarian," "clerk," and "fighting" focus not only on her work at the convention, but on important ideas, the library, people at the convention and the roles that they had, and, of course, the letters, and Bartlett's work as a spy for her father. In spite of the differences in the use of this code, it is the commonality in the use of

this code that connects the narratives of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett throughout this project.

8.9 The Alaska Constitution

The Alaska Constitution was the result of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett used this code family during their interviews. The Alaska Constitution was the task on which the delegates and staff focused, thus creating the commonality of this code between the four narratives seems logical, as is the commonality of the memories of those individuals involved. However, the differences became apparent with each interviewee's choice of codes and their focus. For example, Coghill uses only the code "constitution" and "state constitution," and is very specific. Fischer also talks about the Alaska Constitution in his narrative, and covers different aspects of the constitution. Fischer's codes were "vote/d," "judiciary article," "judiciary branch," "judiciary rulings," "transcript/s," "transcription," "framework," "Bill of Rights," "Declaration of Rights," "Alaska State Senate," "state elections," "state elections," "state judges," "state land," "state resources," and "articles." The difference here is that Fischer spent his early childhood in Germany and Russia, and evidenced by his codes, treasured the concept of self-government and freedom. Hurley used the codes "constitution," "constitutional studies," and "people's constitution," and uses this code family only seven times during her two recorded interviews. In fact, one of the clear differences in this analysis is Hurley's low usage of the code family "Alaska Constitution." Hurley treasured her work with convention; however, the time she spent working for Gruening was also a significant part of her life. By contrast, Bartlett used this code family seventeen times during her three recorded interviews, and the code "constitution" was the code that she most often used. Bartlett was more focused on the event of the convention, illustrated by her count of 168 uses of

the code family “Alaska Constitutional Convention” than she was on the code family “Alaska Constitution,” which she used the seventeen times.

Coghill, Hurley, and Bartlett used the code family “Alaska Constitution,” much less than Fischer, who used this code family sixty-four times. One reason for this difference, is that Coghill’s interviews started out focusing on Freemasonry, which led to his discussion of time as a delegate at the Alaska Constitutional Convention while Fischer’s one recorded interview was only about Fischer’s life and his time as a delegate at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. Fischer also used this interview to promote a citizen’s responsibility to vote, while Hurley and Bartlett were more focused on the event and the people.

8.10 Freemason

Coghill’s interviews recall his family’s connection to Freemasonry. Coghill’s codes were “Freemason,” “Mason,” “Masonic,” “Scottish Rite,” “Sojourners,” “Jesters,” “fraternity,” and “the organization.” Coghill was not a Freemason at the time of the Alaska Constitutional Convention; however, because of a long family history, this code family was very much at the locus of his identity, even during his interviews for this project. Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett have no connections to Freemasonry; therefore, they did not talk about it during any of their interviews.

8.11 Structure

Only Coghill used another code family during his two non-recorded interviews and his two recorded interviews, and that was “structure.” Coghill used this code family thirty times, and it contains the codes “throughout,” “territorial,” “family,” “Masonic,” “government,” “community,” “property,” “structure of the inner-soul,” “institutional,” “apportionment,” “whole,” “middle,” “Christian,” and “political.” The code family “structure” that Coghill talks

about was connected to the codes “principles,” “philosophy,” and “camaraderie,” used twelve times. These three codes remained outside the code family structure, but were equally important. Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett is that they did not use this code family. This is significant, because this structure is part of Coghill’s foundation which connects him to his past.

8.12 Unity

Where Coghill talked about “structure” in his narrative, Fischer used the code family “unity” eighty-three times during his interview, and this shows a similarity between Coghill’s and Fischer’s narratives. There are sixteen codes in this code family. They are “place,” “agreement,” “agree,” “majority,” “many,” “unified,” “phenomenal,” “experience/s/ed,” “feeling/s,” “together,” “compromise,” “years, as in passage of time,” “common purpose,” “respectful,” “camaraderie,” and “fellow man.” These codes connect and have a great deal of similarity. Both Fischer and Coghill used the code “camaraderie” to describe how close the people, both delegates and staff, became at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. The most significant difference is that Fischer has so many codes in this group, creating its own code family. Coghill, Hurley, and Bartlett’s codes are connected to Fischer’s, and are located in other code families. As much as Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett were united in a single cause at the convention, and their interviews reflected accordingly. The connection, and the memory of the Alaska Constitutional Convention are recalled by Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett, and it unifies them. In other words, they recalled memories of the convention with the same intensity.

8.13 Statehood

The reason for this camaraderie was that the delegates and staff had a common goal for Alaska, and that was statehood. Like Fischer’s use of “unity,” Hurley uses the code family “statehood” forty-five times in her two recorded phone interviews. She recalled spending time

working alongside many Alaskan statehood advocates, and the codes that are embedded in this code family are “bill,” “vote,” “voter,” “issue,” “Alaska Statehood Committee,” “Operation Statehood,” “statehood,” “statehood bill,” and “United States.” Hurley’s attention to detail before, during, and after the convention, led her to dedicate herself to a life in public service. She worked for the territory and the state of Alaska for many years.

8.14 Final Analysis

The Alaska Constitutional Convention brought together people from many different backgrounds. Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett represented this diversity, as illustrated in this project. In examining the different code families, one sees the commonalities and the differences among the people in this project. The commonalities are centered in the convention itself, and the intangible devotion to the convention and constitution that the delegates and staff carried away with them, like a badge of honor. The differences came from their past, also important, and contributed to their distinct individuality. This individuality, combined with a single purpose contributed to the success of the Alaska Constitutional Convention. Throughout all four narratives, this thesis shows that Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett came from very different backgrounds at the convention. However, they, like others at the convention combined their efforts to write the Alaska Constitution.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

The success of the Alaska Constitutional Convention has been attributed to the lack of special interest lobbyists and the dedication of the delegates and staff to the idea of community. However, it was the camaraderie between the delegates and staff that was largely due to the attitude of non-partisanship among delegates. Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett covered this in their code family “politics” and the “Alaska Constitutional Convention,” and throughout a significant part of their interviews. They also noted that there was an absence of outside interests. Coghill says

We...were pretty much left alone. We were at the University of Alaska, (Fairbanks). The public...knew that there was a bunch of Alaskans up there doing some exercise, but...no...big effort of lobbying us. And so we were able to do the research that we needed to do. We were able to get things done.²⁶⁶

Thus, the delegates’ ability to get things done at the Alaska Constitutional Convention was the result of a singleness of purpose and a great deal of mutual respect. Ultimately, the task was so all-consuming that agreement among the delegates trumped the partisan politics at the convention. However, there is more to the convention than the agreement among the delegates. While civility created a mutual respect, this does not mean that nobody argued; however, they were respectful. Fischer says

There were endless arguments (among the delegates)...It was about big issues and little issues...We would have meetings...so there was a lot of interaction, and people got to know each other. Everyone was respectful of everyone else, and got along...There was no dissension.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁶ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhill), Spring 2012. North Pole, Alaska.

²⁶⁷ Vic Fischer, Recorded Interview (by Leslie Drumhill), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

This enabled them to focus on the task, and finish the job. Coghill says “We didn’t have any stalling tactics.”²⁶⁸ In other words, everyone focused on the task at hand, in spite of being from different backgrounds. Fischer goes on to say

I think each person brought his and her... social background to the... debates and discussions. The overriding thing was we had one common purpose, and that was to write the best possible constitution for the future of Alaska, for the people of Alaska... that was... just a common goal, and of course a concurrent goal.²⁶⁹

Additionally, Alaskans at the convention as well as many people throughout the territory were united in the common cause of Statehood, and the Alaska Constitutional Convention was the culmination of many people’s efforts. Partisan politics were not part of that cause, for many Alaskans representing different points of view were willing to work together for the creation of their own government. Hurley says

Partisan politics didn’t enter into it. The main issue for having the convention was to... show Congress that we were capable of making decisions on our own, and... we were willing to pay taxes to do it... (We) weren’t asking for a handout... We wanted to be able to make our own decisions, to make our own mistake.²⁷⁰

The independence and self-government that Hurley talks about in her interviews were also at the heart of the Alaskan Statehood Movement, and the delegates and staff at the Alaska Constitutional Convention were all part of that movement. Hurley goes on to say

There was this feeling in... most of the delegates, that it was something that they were contributing (to)... There was a lot of respect... for... each other... The camaraderie was (there).²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. North Pole, Alaska.

²⁶⁹ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁷⁰ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁷¹ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Ultimately, it is this camaraderie and respect that led to the non-partisan politics at the convention. To put it succinctly, the lack of partisan politics was a significant factor in the success of the convention. Bartlett says

I wouldn't wonder if Jack (Coghill; he was a Republican) was on the other side, (than Vic) Fischer, (who was a Democrat), of a great many issues, but people were polite in those days. People agreed to differ...so that we could all be excited about it...without worrying about, my team is going to prevail.²⁷²

Bartlett, as well as Coghill, Fischer, and Hurley were not the only individuals to see the importance of balance and non-partisanship. In his 1956 article, "Liberalism in America: A Note for Europeans," Arthur Schlesinger writes

Each is a great half, wrote Emerson of the liberal and the conservative, but an impossible whole. Each exposes the abuses of the other, but in a true society, in a true man, both must combine. In elaborating on the character of each great half, Emerson went on to define the diverging tendencies which liberalism and conservatism have embodied within the American consensus... The liberal belief in working for change does not mean that he regards human reason as an infallible or incorruptible instrument, or that he thinks utopia is just around the corner. But it does mean that he feels that history never stands still; that social change can better people's lives and happiness, and that margin of human gain, however limited, is worth the effort.²⁷³

According to Schlesinger, Emerson speaks of the balance of liberal and conservative ideas in American politics; in a similar way, the differences in their political point of view allowed the delegates and staff to work together at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. For example, during his interview, Vic Fischer spoke about the Democrats, who were in the majority, making sure that the Republicans had an equal voice at the convention.²⁷⁴ To accomplish this, the

²⁷² D.A.Bartlett, Recorded Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁷³ Arthur Schlesinger Jr., *Liberalism in America: A Note for Europeans*, *The Politics of Hope* (Boston: Riverside Press, 1962), 1. www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/schleslib.html

²⁷⁴ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Democratic majority made sure that the Republicans were in control of some of the committees at the convention.

Through careful and detailed observation, Bartlett was able to identify the importance of non-partisanship and the use of language in the writing of the constitution at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. Furthermore, she also was able to give detailed information about the convention to her father, one of the most significant architects of the Alaskan Statehood Movement. Along the same lines, Coghill, who at thirty, was nine years older than Bartlett, felt as everyone else did: that they were involved with something bigger than themselves. Coghill says

It was put together by scratch; (by) a bunch of Alaskans... We took excerpts from... certain states. We looked at... how they did things... We would get consultants, and... bring them in... We had... a firm belief in... our work putting the thing together.²⁷⁵

The oral narratives of Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett concur with Coghill. Fischer says

... There was a very strong common purpose. It was a phenomenal education process of work... We learned to work with other people... (to compromise)... It was just a matter of... common purpose and respect for each other.²⁷⁶

Hurley not only talks about the common purpose, but about the camaraderie as well, when she says “There was a lot of respect... for... each other, and... the camaraderie was there.”²⁷⁷ Bartlett talks about the connection between everyone at the convention, not just the delegates, when she says

It was a very emotional business, the constitutional convention. We just really bonded. Everybody was working for it. Not just the delegates, everybody.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ Jack Coghill, Recorded Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁷⁶ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁷⁷ Katie Hurley, Recorded Phone Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁷⁸ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview Three (by Leslie Drumhiller), Spring 2013. Fairbanks, Alaska.

Given that the constitution for the future state of Alaska was written in seventy-five days, the focus at the convention was intense. Fischer explained how well everything was organized, such as the preliminary research that convention secretary Tom Stewart and others had done prior to the convention that enabled the committees to be formed quickly. Fischer described the assembling of committees the moment the convention started when he says

There were committees established...from the beginning...(and) by the end of the first week...(there were)...committees dealing with every aspect of the constitution...We (had) consultants who had already drafted a tentative list of...what needs to be in a constitution.²⁷⁹

Admittedly, there was a great deal to accomplish in the writing of the constitution during the convention, and the delegates, such as Coghill and Fischer, would not have been able to accomplish their task had it not been for the efforts of the staff, such as Chief Clerk Katie Hurley and librarian, researcher, clerk, and, as stated earlier in this thesis, spy for her father, D.A. Bartlett doing research and other office work.

As a senior member of the staff, Hurley noticed many things, and one of these was the attitude of convention president Bill Egan, who was also responsible for the camaraderie that existed throughout the convention. Hurley says

There was a feeling in...most of the delegates that it was something that they were going to be contributing (to)...There was a lot of respect...for...each other...The camaraderie was (there). I also believe it was the leadership of...Bill Egan...the president...the person in charge of running the meeting, made a lot of difference.²⁸⁰

Coghill, Fischer, and Bartlett all agree with Hurley about Egan's positive contribution, and the reason for the success of the convention. Ultimately, Egan's ability to lead contributed to the positive momentum of the convention, although it was not the only reason for its success. The

²⁷⁹ Vic Fischer, Recorded Phone Interview (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012, Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁸⁰ Katie Hurley, Recorded Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012, Fairbanks, Alaska.

preliminary work and research that had been accomplished was also a factor, as was the focus of the delegates and staff that helped to maintain the level of commitment and enthusiasm for the task. People at the convention would strive for excellence, and Bartlett reflects on the delegates' desire to write the best constitution that they could, when she says

Everybody came... (They all) wanted to do this, (and) wanted to do it very well, so that it would help the statehood movement. They wanted to write a good constitution. But, when they got to writing it, they really were concerned to... write the best constitution they could.²⁸¹

Similarly, in their narratives, Coghill, Fischer, and Hurley agreed closely with Bartlett, and her memories of the commitment to excellence at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. These memories are echoed in the words of *Article One Section One* of the Alaska Constitution:

This constitution is dedicated to the principles that all persons have a natural right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and the enjoyment of the rewards of their own industry; and all persons are equal and entitled to equal rights, opportunities, and protection under the law; and that all persons have corresponding obligations to the people and to the state.²⁸²

These principles are connected to the ideals that began with the United States Constitutional Convention of 1787. The men and women of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, delegates and staff members, were there for one purpose: to write the best constitution they could. Furthermore, Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett's commitment to the cause of Alaskan statehood did not end at the close of the convention. Much like the "living constitution" that they helped to create, they would set high standards for themselves that would enable them to become leaders in their chosen fields. However, it was the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and their involvement in creating it, that Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett remember with excitement. During each retelling of their individual stories, they appear to transport themselves back to the

²⁸¹ D.A. Bartlett, Recorded Interview Two (by Leslie Drumhiller), Fall 2012. Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁸² The Delegates, *The Alaska Constitution* (Fairbanks: The University of Alaska, 1956), 5.

place where they believe that they made a difference, and to where they contributed to the living history of Alaska the place, and to its people.

One similarity of these narratives involves the use of oral history. A great deal of attention was paid to the individuals who took part in this thesis, and, in the interviews, Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett used an emotional connection to recall the Alaska Constitutional Convention. For example, Bartlett's codes and code families revealed a young woman who spent her life as a quiet intellectual, and a keen observer of the human condition.

The research in this thesis has further revealed a clear picture of the Alaska Constitutional Convention through the eyes of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett, using emotion to trigger memory. For example, the memory of family was a significant part of the narrative of each of the four individuals. Another common code was that of "work," or the idea that through hard work one could accomplish anything. This is especially true for the four individuals in this thesis.

The convention, which accomplished its task in seventy-five days, was recalled by each interviewee with a flood of memory, and that moment in time was preserved with a great deal of clarity within their narratives. The strong, almost tangible emotion of that moment fueled their memories of the Alaska Constitutional Convention.

The opportunity for historians and writers to conduct future research using this type of oral history on the Alaska Constitutional Convention, has now become almost non-existent. Coghill and Fischer are close to ninety-one, Hurley is almost ninety-five, and Bartlett died in the summer of 2015.

9.1 Concluding Thoughts

The commonalities and differences highlighted by the thematic analyses of the narratives of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett are significant. Their narratives reveal the complex nature of the individual in this thesis, and illustrate how they connect with each other. The commonalities are illustrated best through the way that each interviewee used emotion in the recollection of their memories. Whether they were delegates or staff, men or women, this recall was emotionally charged and very similar. During the interviews of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett, the tone of their voices revealed this emotion in both subtle and tangible ways, such as when they spoke of the atmosphere, camaraderie, and community. In fact, similar emotional recall was also used in their memories of family. In other words, an individual first learns about being part of a community, from their family unit, they applied to their experience in the convention. Thus, at the Alaska Constitutional Convention, these four individuals were able to develop the camaraderie they displayed from lessons learned in their family units. This emotional recollection in the narratives of Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett connected their memories together.

In spite of the similarity in their recollections, differences between the individual narratives reveal themselves. For example, Coghill did not mention women in his code family “family” while Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett do. Also, Fischer only used the code family “family” seventeen times, and Coghill used it fifty-eight times; Hurley forty-seven times, and Bartlett seventy-four times. Some of these differences have to do with the differences between delegate and staff, and men and women. But, for this particular code family the differences do illustrate differences in their backgrounds. This code family impacts the constitution in the writing of the Preamble, when the delegates write about the “...pioneering of this great land, in

order to secure and transmit to succeeding generations our heritage...”²⁸³ The heritage that is passed on to succeeding generations is the epitome of family, and that makes the code family “family” especially significant.

Also, a significant part of Coghill’s interviews were spent on the topic of Freemasonry, and a patriarchal service club. There are women’s groups, but they are largely supportive of the main body. Coghill comes from a long line of Freemasons.

As stated earlier, Fischer only used the code family “family” seventeen times. The subject of family is emotionally charged, much as emotion that connected the staff and delegates at the convention. Fischer’s journey to the United States, and eventually to Alaska, was especially challenging, and emotionally recalled in his interview. Fischer was raised mostly by his mother, who, it appears, created much of the positivity in his life. During his father’s occasional visits to Russia, the family fell into a more typical patriarchal mode. This was similar to Coghill, largely through this patriarchal role. But, Fischer does not limit his comments about family to patriarchy. He also talks about values, beliefs, adventure, and traveling within the code family “family.” Although, the numbers of this code family are low, in Fischer’s case, it does not decrease its importance to him. Hurley and Bartlett were raised to be strong and independent women with an emphasis that appears different than the mid-century gender stereotypes

Reflecting on the code families lead to a further observation. In the mid-Twentieth Century, most gender roles found the women at home and in supportive roles and the men in strong patriarchal leadership roles. In her portrayal of this code family, Hurley showed her complete devotion and obedience to her mother with her use of the code “obedient daughter.” Hurley’s codes within this code family “family” are about family roles. Neither Coghill, Fischer,

²⁸³ The Delegates. *The Alaska Constitution* (Fairbanks: The University of Alaska, 1956), 4.

or Bartlett used this code in the code family “family.” However, with Bartlett it is implied in her relationship with her father, although Bartlett never says it. This is the largest display of gender difference. In the context of these interviews, Coghill and Fischer do not refer to themselves as sons or as obedient, but both Hurley and Bartlett refer to themselves as daughters. In fact, the majority of Bartlett’s codes within this code family describe her father and mother. The difference between Bartlett and Hurley’s daughter status is that Bartlett was allowed to pursue the career of her choice, and Hurley was not. Both Hurley and Bartlett share in the commonality of devoted daughters. The devotion was not out of fear, but of loyalty and affection. Hurley and Bartlett, and Coghill, and even Fischer have some type of loyalty to the ideal of family, for their families make communities, and communities work together at forming states, such as Alaska.

In remembering, it was the commonalities that were mentioned the most often during the interviews. However, applying thematic analysis to their transcripts highlighted significant differences. For example, Coghill’s codes within the code family “Alaska Constitutional Convention” dealt with his specific job, numbered forty-four, and were the second lowest in number usage. Fischer used this code family less than Coghill, Hurley, or Bartlett. He uses this code family seventeen times, and his codes involved the convention, and the more descriptive code “unity.” Further, reflecting gender differences, Hurley and Bartlett use the code family “Alaska Constitutional Convention” significantly more than Coghill or Fischer. Hurley used this code family one-hundred times, and her codes centered around people and place. Bartlett used this code family one-hundred seventy-eight times, and her codes centered around people, and her place in the convention.

Within the code family “Alaska Constitution,” gender differences were not as clear as they are in some code families such as “family.” Fischer is the only one to use this code family

frequently. He used the code family “Alaska Constitution” sixty-four times. His codes detail the specific work of writing the constitution. By comparison, Coghill, Hurley, and Bartlett do not use this code family very much. However, all four of the individuals spoke of the unity and the camaraderie of the experience at the Alaska Constitutional Convention. Furthermore, while staff members Hurley and Bartlett did not write the Alaska Constitution, they strongly supported this effort, and they shared the enthusiasm for what the document represented: a model constitution for the future state of Alaska. Reflecting this intent intent, Article One, Section Two of the *Alaska Constitution*, the delegates write

All political power is inherent in the people. All government originates with the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the people as a whole.²⁸⁴

It is realistic to say that, in the remaining articles, a small percentage of the gender terms are patriarchal. However, while it first appears that the Alaska Constitution contains some patriarchal references, Article IX, Section Ten states “...Personal pronouns used in this constitution shall be construed as including either sex.”²⁸⁵ This is closely connected with the authors’ use of the word people. The delegates’ use of the gender neutral, “people,” instead of “man” and “woman” gives support to the idea that they were concerned with gender equality. In fact, the ideal of gender equality held by the delegates and authors of the constitution is illustrated at the very beginning of the Alaska Constitution in the Preamble. In the Preamble and Article One, the Declaration of Rights, the delegates only use male gender identity three times, in Section Eleven. The rest of Article One they use a form of the word “people,” or “their” as matter of identity. The delegates write in the Preamble

²⁸⁴ The Delegates, *The Alaska Constitution* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska, 1956), 5.

²⁸⁵ The Delegates, *The Alaska Constitution* (Fairbanks: The University of Alaska, 1956), 36.

We the people of Alaska, grateful to God and to those who founded our nation and pioneered this great land, in order to secure and transmit to succeeding generations our heritage of political, civil, and religious liberty within the United States, do ordain and establish this constitution for the State of Alaska.²⁸⁶

Thus, careful attention is paid to the unity of gender in the Preamble of the Alaska Constitution.

The Alaska Constitutional Convention was an experience that has been written about for over sixty years. “Alaska Constitutional Convention” and “Alaska Constitution.” For example, at twenty-one, Bartlett was especially proud to be part of such a significant historical event. She would write detailed letters to her father, acting as his spy, about the events that happened at the convention. Hurley was inspired by the teachings of Ernest Gruening, and this led her to a life of public service. Fischer had traveled from Germany and Russia, and could not understand why there was a part of the United States that did not allow its citizens to vote. And Coghill flew over much of the interior of Alaska in a bush plane to become a delegate at the Alaska Constitutional Convention.

The Alaska Constitutional Convention allowed both men and women to work together as people. Their goal with the creation of the Alaska Constitution was to create a model document that would exist in perpetuity for the benefit of future generations, and the gender equality that was addressed in the Alaska Constitution was made simpler by the non-partisan politics at the convention: the Democrats were in the majority, but they gave equal representation to the Republican minority. This non-partisanship allowed for the development of a close camaraderie, established early on during the Alaska Constitutional Convention. As a result, the forty-nine male delegates to created a document that referred to men and women as “people;” an all-inclusive term, and stressed the equal rights of all Alaskans.

²⁸⁶ The Delegates, *The Alaska Constitution* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska, 1956), 4.

The Alaska Constitution was the culmination of the goal for statehood for Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett, as well as the other delegates and staff during the Alaska Constitutional Convention. During all four of their interviews, the convention and the constitution represented a highlight of their lives that would never be duplicated. For more than sixty years, they have shared their memories, using the emotions connected with their memories, to recall the events of the convention.

Sixty years later, the Alaska Constitution is as relevant a document as it was in 1956 at the close of the convention. The Alaska Constitution represents an ideal way of life to the contemporary Alaskan. People today are the future generations that the delegates wrote about over half a decade ago. This is especially relevant for the lawmaker of the Twenty-First Century who, following the lead of the framers of the constitution, could work together to help Alaskans and Alaska have a better quality of life for themselves and future generations of Alaskans.

When they told their stories in the beginning of the Twenty-First Century Coghill, Fischer, Hurley, and Bartlett used emotion in a tangible way to recall the events that led up to statehood, the creation of the Alaska Constitution; and of a place, the Alaska Constitutional Convention where the constitution was written. There would never be another event like this one.

Bibliography

- Alaska Humanities Forum. "Governing Alaska the Constitutional Convention" *Alaska History and Cultural Studies*. Accessed 2012.
www.akhistorycourse.org/article.php?artID=222
- Alaska Statehood Committee. *Handbook for Delegates to the Constitutional Convention*. College: Alaska Statehood Committee, 1955.
- Allen, Barbara and Donald Lutz. *The Alaska Constitution: Realizing the Theory of a Compound Republic*. Bloomington: Vincent Ostrom, 2006, Accessed 2012.
www.indiana.edu/~voconf/papers/allen_voconf.pdf
- Atwood, Evangeline. *Frontier Politics: Alaska's James Wickersham*. Portland: Binford & Mort, 1979.
- Bartlett, D.A. (Librarian, Researcher, and Clerk at the Alaska Constitutional Convention), Interviewed by Leslie Drumhiller, Fairbanks, Alaska, Spring 2012.
- Bartlett, D.A. (Librarian, Researcher, and Clerk at the Alaska Constitutional Convention), Interviewed by Leslie Drumhiller, Fairbanks, Alaska, Fall 2012.
- Bartlett, D.A. (Librarian, Researcher, and Clerk at the Alaska Constitutional Convention), Interviewed by Leslie Drumhiller, Fairbanks, Alaska, Spring 2013.
- Bowkett, Gerald. *Reaching for A Star*. Washington: Epicenter Press, 1989.
- Cannavo, Peter F. *The Working Landscape Founding, Preservation, and the Politics of Place*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007.
- Cashen, William R. *Farthest North College President Charles Bunnell and the Early History of the University of Alaska*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1972.
- Coen, Ross. "Not Old Enough to Vote, but Able to Support Statehood: University of Alaska Students and the Statehood Movement 1955-1957." *Alaska History* 24, No. 1 (2009), 1.
- Coghill, Jack. *Growing up in Alaska*. Juneau: Kayto Communications Incorporated, 2009.
- Coghill, Jack, (Delegate to the Alaska Constitutional Convention), Interviewed by Leslie Drumhiller, Fairbanks, Alaska, Fall 2009.
- Coghill, Jack, (Delegate to the Alaska Constitutional Convention), Interviewed by Leslie Drumhiller, Nenana, Alaska, August 2010.

- Coghill, Jack, (Delegate to the Alaska Constitutional Convention), Interviewed by Leslie Drumhiller, North Pole, Alaska, February 2012.
- Cole, Dermot. *Historic Fairbanks*. Texas: Historical Printing Network, 2006.
- Cole, Dermot. *North to the Future the Alaska Story 1959-2009*. Washington: Epicenter Press, 2008.
- Cole, Dermot. "The Road to Alaska's Statehood" *Celebrating Alaska's 50th Anniversary of Statehood 1959-2009*. Florida: Faircount Media Group, 2009.
- Cole, Terrence. *Blinded by Riches: The Permanent Funding Problem and the Prudhoe Bay Effect*. Anchorage: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 2004.
- Cole, Terrence. *The Cornerstone on College Hill*
- Cooley, Richard A. *Alaska a Challenge in Conservation*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1967.
- Council, Mary. *Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back Bob Bartlett and Alaska Statehood Book One*, Maryland: Unpublished, 1969.
- Council, Mary. *Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back Bob Bartlett and Alaska Statehood Book Two*, Maryland: Unpublished, 1969.
- Council, Mary. *Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back Bob Bartlett and Alaska Statehood Book Three*. Maryland: Unpublished, 1969.
- Council, Mary. *Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back Bob Bartlett and Alaska Statehood Book Four*. Maryland: Unpublished, 1969.
- The Delegates. *The Alaska Constitution*. College: The University of Alaska, 1956.
- DeVaughn, Melissa. "A Constitution for the Ages" *The Alaska Sportsman* (alaskamagazine.com June 2008) Accessed 2015.
www.alaskawriters.com/membersites/memberuploads/medevaughn/Constitution_presentation.pdf
- Fischer, Victor. *Alaska Constitutional Convention*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1975.
- Fischer, Victor. *To Russia with Love an Alaskan's Journey*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska, Fairbanks, 2012.
- Fischer, Victor, (Delegate to the Alaska Constitutional Convention), Interviewed by Leslie Drumhiller, Fairbanks, Alaska, Fall 2012.

- Gibson, William J. and Andrew Brown. *Working with Qualitative Data*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2009.
- Gislason, Eric. *A Brief History of Alaska Statehood 1867-1959*. Accessed 2012.
xroads.virginia.edu/-cap/Bartlett/49state.html
- Google. *Google Maps*, 2014.
- Gruening, Ernest. *The Battle for Alaska Statehood*. College: University of Alaska Press, 1967.
- Haines, John. Forward to *The Last Stories of Alaska Land Past and Present*, ed. Wayne Mergler. Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Books, 1996.
- Harrison, Gordon S. *Alaska's Constitution a Citizen's Guide*. Anchorage: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1986.
- Haycox, Stephen. *Frigid Embrace Politics, Economics and Environment in Alaska*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2006.
- Herron, Edward A. *Alaska Land of Tomorrow*. New York: Whittlesey House, 1947.
- Hilscher, Herb, and Miriam Hilscher. *Alaska U.S.A.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1959.
- Hurley, Katie (Chief Clerk for the Alaska Constitutional Convention), Interviewed by Leslie Drumhilller, Fairbanks, Alaska, Fall 2012, Interview One.
- Hurley, Katie (Chief Clerk for the Alaska Constitutional Convention), Interviewed by Leslie Drumhilller, Fairbanks, Alaska, Fall 2012, Interview Two.
- Jeffery, Edmond C. ed. *Alaska—Who's Here—What's Doing—Who's Doing It 1955*. Anchorage: The Jeffery Publishing Company, 1955.
- Kleinfeld, Judith. *Go for It! Finding Your Own Frontier*. Washington: Epicenter Press, 2003.
- Kizzia, Tom. *Reflections on Alaska's Journey to Statehood*. Anchorage: Anchorage Daily News, 1984.
- LiteSite Alaska. *The Road to Statehood*. Anchorage: University of Alaska Anchorage, 2011.
www.litesite.org/index.cfm%3Fsection%3FDigitalArchives&page%3DGovernment&cat%3DAlaska-Statehood
- McBeath, Gerald A., and Thomas A. Morehouse. *Alaska Politics and Government*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.

- Morehouse, Thomas A. and Victor Fischer. *Borough Government in Alaska*. Fairbanks: Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, 1971.
- Morrison, Eric. "Conventional Bean Counter." *Juneau Empire*. Accessed 2014.
Juneauempire.com/statehood/stories/jackcoghill.shtml
- Murray, Lieutenant William S. "A Soldier Looks at Postwar Alaska" *Alaska the Territorial Life Magazine*. Seattle: Alaska Life Publishing Company, February 1954.
- Naske, Claus. *An Interpretive History of Alaskan Statehood*. Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1973.
- Naske, Claus. *Edward Lewis Bob Bartlett of Alaska a Life in Politics*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1979.
- Naske, Claus. *Ernest Gruening Alaska's Greatest Governor*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2004.
- Naske Claus. *49 At Last! The Battle for Alaska Statehood*. Washington: Epicenter Press, 2009.
- Public Administration Service. *Constitutional Studies Volume One*. Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1955.
- Rand McNally. *Rand McNally Guide to Alaska and Yukon for Tourists, Investors, Homeseekers and Sportsman*. New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1922.
- Ritter, Harry. *Alaska's History the People, Land, And Events of the North Country*. Seattle: Alaska Northwest Books, 1993.
- Roberts, Malcolm, ed. *Going Up in Flames the Promises and Pledges of Alaska Statehood Under Attack*. Anchorage: Alaska Pacific University Press, 1990.
- Rogers, George. *The Future of Alaska Economic Consequences of Statehood*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1962.
- Ross, Sherwood. *Gruening of Alaska: The Dynamic Career of a Remarkable U.S. Senator*. New York: Best Books Inc., 1968.
- Schlesinger Jr., Arthur. *Liberalism in America: A Note for Europeans. The Politics of Hope*. Boston: Riverside Press, 1962. www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/schleslib.html
- Schneider, William. *So They Understand*. Logan: Utah University State Press, 2002.

Schneider, William. *Living with Stories Telling, Re-Telling, and Remembering*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2008.

Stewart, Thomas. *Recollections On the Writing of The Alaska Constitution*. Accessed 2012. www.ostrumworkshop.indiana.edu/colloquia/materials/papers/stewart_papers.pdf

Sundborg, George. *Statehood for Alaska the Issues Involved and the Facts About the Issues*. Anchorage: Alaska Statehood Association, 1946. Accessed fall 2012. <http://www.alaska.edu/creatingalaska/downloads/Statehood-for-Alaska.pdf>

Tobola, Deborah. "Writing a Constitution" *LiteSite Alaska*. Accessed 2012. www.litesite.org

United States Congress. (accessed November 1, 2015), www.bioguide.congress.gov

United States Department of the Interior. *Mid-Century Alaska*. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1958.

White, Erik A. *Bob Bartlett and Ernest Gruening: The Relationship That Helped Alaska Become A State*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2008.

Whitehead, John S. "Statehood for Alaska And Hawaii." *Interpreting Alaska's History: An Anthology*. Edited by Mary Childers Mangusso and Stephen W. Haycox, 416 & 418. Anchorage: Anchorage Pacific University Press, 1989.

Whitehead, John S. "The Singular Event and the Everyday Routine: The Interplay of History and Culture in the Shaping of Memory" *Interpreting Alaska's History: An Anthology*. Mary Mangusso, ed. Anchorage: Alaska Pacific University Press, 1989.

Whitehead, John S. *Completing the Union Alaska, Hawai'i, and the Battle for Statehood*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004.

Wickersham, Honorable James. *Diary of James Wickersham* (Alaska State Library – Historical Collections MS 107 Box 4 Diary 25, 1915), 41. (Accessed 10/28/15) library.alaska.gov/hist/hist_docs/wickersham/ASL-MS0107-diary025-1915

Wickersham, Honorable James. *Old Yukon Tales—Trails—and Trials*. Washington D.C.: Washington Law Book Co., 1938.